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Sunday, April 20, 1980

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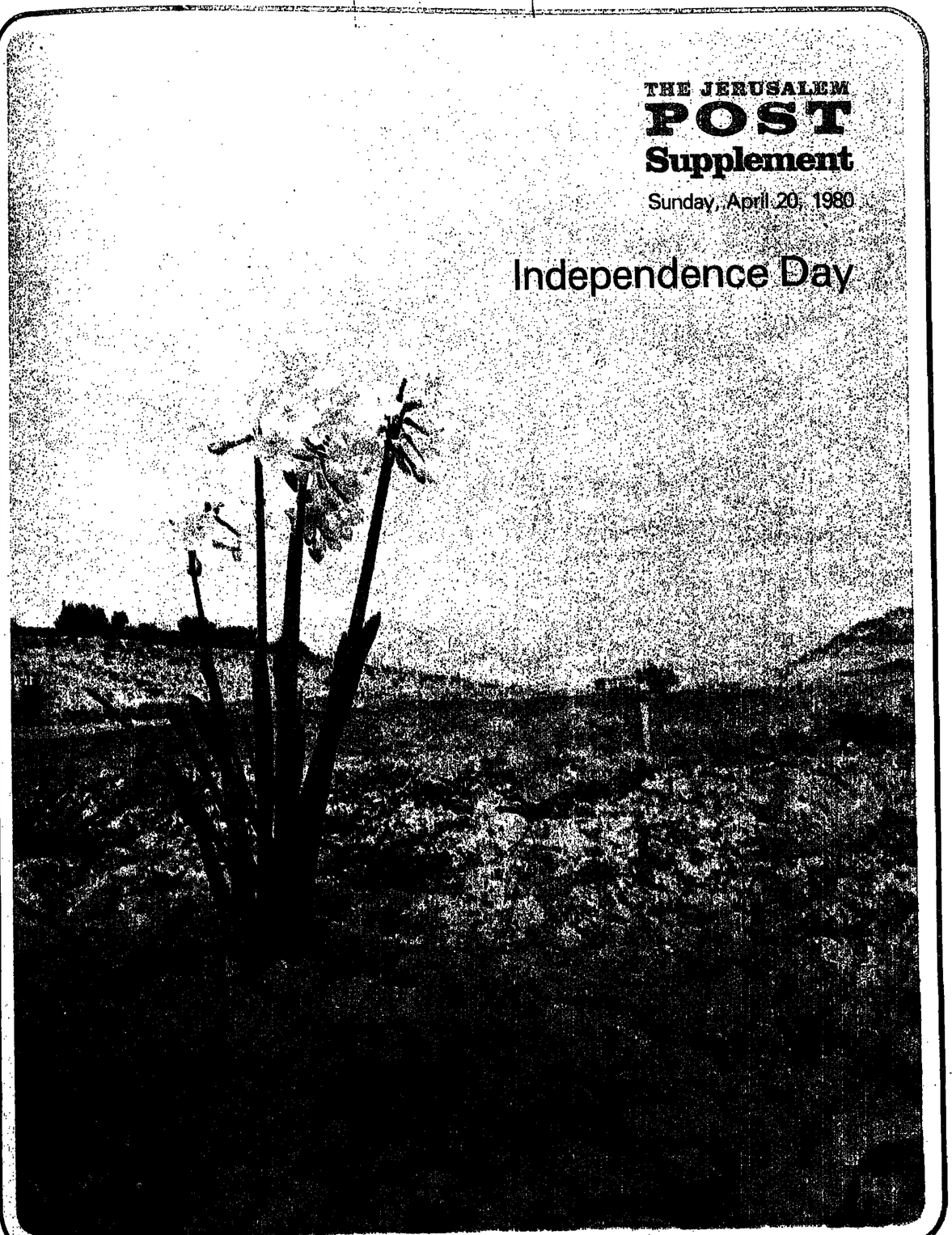

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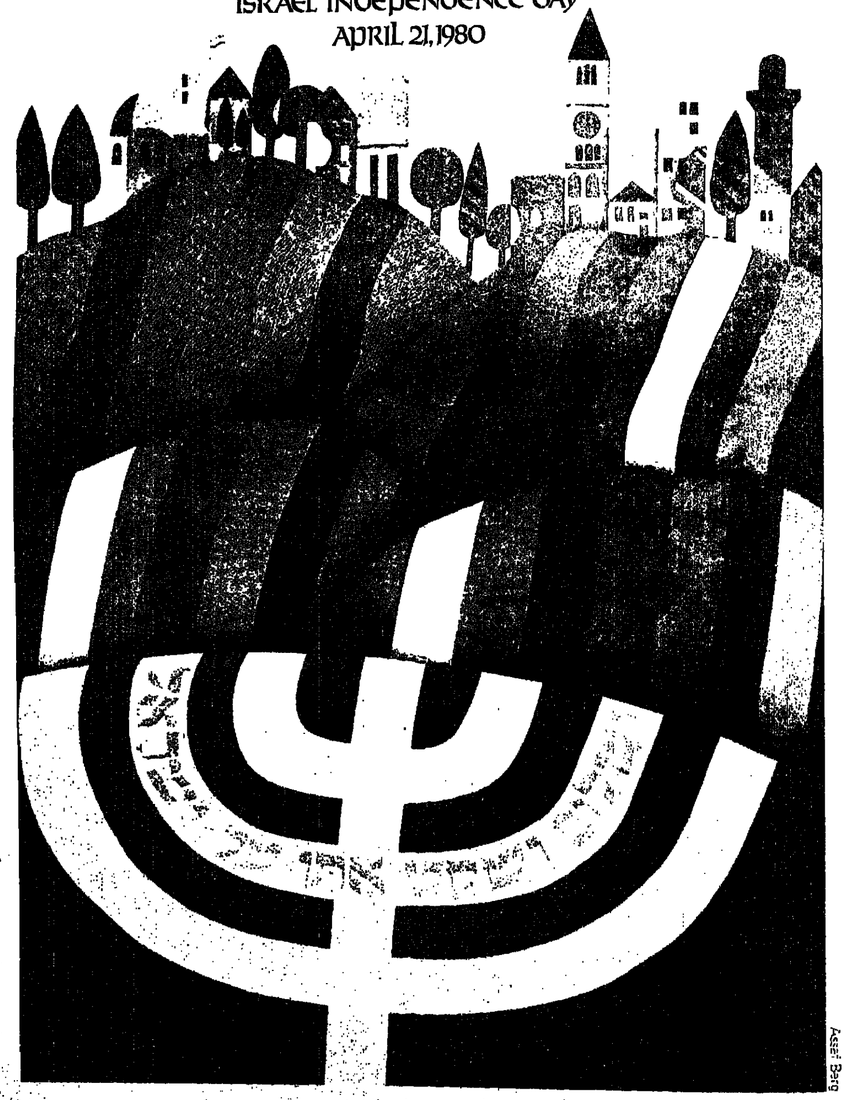

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On the cover

A lily grows in the Avdat experimental farm in the Negev.

Photograph by David Rubinger.

The independence generation

To capture something of the attitudes and expectations of Israelis who, like the state itself, are now in their thirties, our reporters interviewed seven successful young people who grew up with the country. The seven by no means represent the entire generation, but all are concerned with the basic problems facing Israel and are perceptive and articulate in discussing our society and their place in it.

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REPORT SUSPICIOUS OBJECTS!

The meaning of feathers

Mark Segal interviews a writer who was raised in "a kind of Galut in the heart of Zion."

HAIM BE'ER is the newest star in the firmament of Hebrew Literature. His dazzling reputation is founded on a modest but brilliant body of work, partly on his poetry but mainly on his first novel *Notzot* (Feathers) just published by Am Oved. The 35-year-old poet-novelist has received the kind of accolade denied to much more seasoned writers.

The acclaim echoes from one literary supplement to another, with acerbic critics known for their destructiveness astounded that for once their dissecting instruments have struck gold. Their chorus of benediction has made this retiring young man with the impish smile and ancient Jewish eyes rather apprehensive as to the kind of treatment awaiting his next book.

The young writer, already hailed as a master of his art, seems somewhat nonplussed by the flood of superlatives. Thus Ziva Shamir in *Ma'ariv*: "...a masterly work of complex craft and multi-faceted style, the greatest literary surprise of recent years, a creation that has the power to cause tremors on our literary map and turn established hierarchies upside down."

Thus Prof. Gershon Shaked in *Ha'aretz*: "...maturer authors have failed to reach such a degree of richness, diversity, tension and balance...*Notzot* is a major link in the path of Hebrew fiction, in which the marginal shifts to the centre. It emerges that the marginal facilitates the unveiling of human survival betwixt utopia and apocalypse — a state of being that agitates the peace of mind of the people of this land."

And Yehudit Uriyan in *Yediot Aharonot*: "...Be'er's work is the greatest marvel that has befallen me in my Hebrew reading in recent years. It is a creation of exemplary writing, of stylish subtlety and complexity, a feast for the educated eye, an heir to Mendele, it is idiomatic in an astonishingly rich manner...It combines so many layers of language and learning... dialects of Hebrew diluted with Yiddish and Aramaic, any attempt at translation might undermine its authenticity..."

She held that Be'er contradicted the late Baruch Kurzweil's theory that *sabra* writers broke the historical continuity of Hebrew literature. She placed him firmly within the great tradition of religious writing whose supreme exponent was S. Y. Agnon.

The book offers a microcosm of Jerusalem, particularly its Orthodox quarters, as seen through the quizzical eyes of a sensitive boy. The point of departure is the Yom Kippur War, the narrator being on an army chaplaincy burial team that is searching for bodies. This obligatory confrontation with death is the constant theme of the novel, as personified by Reb Ilya Riklin, the rollicking grave-digger of the Hevra Kadisha, whose close friendship with the boy's idealistic father enrages his down-to-earth mother.

Dominating the scene is Dr. Mordechai Leder who, overriding parental vetoes,

(Millman)

draws the youth into his weird crusade for reforming the world in keeping with the utopian design of the dead Viennese philosopher Josef Popper. Symbolically, he earns his living collecting donations for a school for the blind. Dickensian characters abound — such as the wig-making Ringel family who secretly worship the annual anniversary of the visit to Jerusalem of the Austro-Hungarian Emperor Franz-Josef.

Facing the life-force pulsating through Jerusalem's Yiddish-speaking inhabitants in the difficult 1950s, hangs the pall of death stretching retroactively — as it were — from the Suez front in October 1973. Beyond that he treats of the deaths of cherished ideologies, dealing iconoclastically with father figures like Ben-Gurion, Begin, and Bialik. In his novel, Haim Be'er pulls out all the feathers of the ideological peacocks that have strutted across the Jewish stage since we burst out of the ghettos.

THE BOOK is autobiographical in the sense that the war experiences are his own. He distilled his horrendous encounter with death in its haphazard ugliness while seeking out bodies for burial in the once-lush groves of the "Chinese Farm". The book contains much of his own childhood and youth, which the confrontation with his inner vision among the wreckage of war seven years ago brought into clear focus.

He was then shaken out of the doubts into which the universal applause which greeted his poetry in 1970 had plunged him. He felt the warm welcome at the time to be rather suspect, sensing that the gap between his self-image and others' expectations was growing dangerously wide. As he sees it, the war proved to be not only Haim Be'er's personal watershed but the collective turning point for Israeli society, "when the vainglorious dream came to an abrupt end," as he puts it.

Spectres from the wastes of Sinai seem to be conjured up in the quiet Dizengoff café. The reluctant darling of the literary cliques that frequent nearby coffee houses stays away from them, disliking their skirmishes. He prefers the company of his wife and children in their small Ramat Gan flat, remaining bewildered as to why some friends snub him out of resentment at his success.

"I want to live as 'squarely' as can be. I would like to emulate Alterman's regular working hours. It was only thanks to my wife's encouragement that I struggled on through all these seven lean years... Did you know that Thomas Mann's wife insisted on a full page of writing before each mealtime?"

He discussed the difficulties facing most authors in Israel for lack of room and money. Most of them must wait until the rest of the household has gone to bed before starting to write. He was lucky to have his late mother's small flat nearby at his disposal. He regrets that his parents did not live to relish his recognition and feels guilty that the creative process was unleashed only after his mother's passing.

The novel unwinds in Jerusalem's Ruhama quarter near Sha'arei Hessed, whereas he grew up in Geula before it was inundated by the Mea She'arim overflow. (Adjoining is Amos Oz's territory in Kerem Avraham). His mother's family have lived in Jerusalem for the past 180 years, having come on aliya with other disciples of the Vilna Gaon, first settling in Safed. His father came here only in 1938 from the Ukraine, having been extricated by a Mandatory immigration certificate issued to "the rabbi of Nahalal." His brothers were founders of the neighbouring moshavim of Nahalal and Beit Yehoshua, but failed to find him work in either place, which led him to settle in Jerusalem, where he opened a grocery. Be'er said there could be no greater contrast than the moshav life-style and open spaces of the Emek and the cramped family home in the confines of the Orthodox Jerusalem neighbourhood. "It was a kind of Galut in the heart of Zion; of emigrant alienation in the midst of the revived Eretz Israel. It was all rather sad."

AS A CHILD he would listen to grown-ups talking and he loved hearing ancient tales from his maternal grandmother on his weekly visits to her rooms in the Natorei Karta stronghold in Mea Shearim's Batei Ungarim. His mother has social aspirations for him, sending him out of the quarter to the elite Mizrachi school "Ma'aleh," which he still recalls with loathing. The primary school teachers were super-pedantic Yekkes, and his Rehavia classmates looked down on the son of the Geula shopkeeper. The secondary school made him even more miserable. They were conscious of creating an élite, and refused to accept the sons of Holocaust survivors or Sephardim, he recalled.

Only the history teacher bothered about him, and he tended to play truant, becoming great friends with the janitors. One of them told him: "Things will turn out all right. You have the hands of a poet, just like Amichai, and he had more troubles than you do at this school, and now all the papers write about him..." His parents could hardly discuss their son with the teachers ("He was a grocer from Geula and they were Yekke doctors from Rehavia") so they transferred him to the Dugma school where the Bible teacher came to his rescue.

Be'er's real break came after his call-up. He was assigned to the chaplaincy corps, after surviving an interview with its commander, Rabbi Goren. He was lucky to be assigned to the corps magazine *Mahanayim* under the aegis of its benign editor, Rabbi Menahem Hacohen. "It was thanks to him I got my first opportunity to enter the world of print. He had enough confidence in me to let me handle the great scholars who contributed to the magazine. I was only 19 and yet I was in contact with such sages as Dov Sadan, Hugo Bergmann and David Flusser."

After the army, his plans for studying philosophy at the Hebrew University did not work out. He married young, and moving to Tel Aviv found a job with Am Oved, first as a proofreader and now as an editor of children's books.

He has few illusions about writers as a species: "I meet them in the course of my daily work. They are rather difficult customers. It's sad to see so many legends falling apart...An old girl friend of mine used to say that when little she always thought authors were dead men."

His extensive library at home makes up for the parental apartment that was bare of books. His favourite Hebrew authors are Agnon, Brenner, Devorah Baron and Asher Barash — the latter two, he considers to be inexplicably neglected. He likes the Russian writers Isaac Babel and Bulgakov, and Polish-Jewish author Bruno Schultz, while his contact with Latin American writing has left him with a deep admiration for Jorge Luis Borges and Gabriel Garcia Marques.

He does not hold with talk of the writer owing a special commitment to any cause, stressing that the author's sole duty is to write well. The few involvements of his family with the state apparatus and political events were usually disastrous. He recalls vividly the brutal raid on their home by rationing inspectors looking for black-market goods. They dragged his father off to prison, but as they found nothing incriminating, they let him off.

THE TRIAL of self-exposure he endured in recapitulating his early years has brought him an inner peace — he refers to it with the ceremonial term of purification. Above all, it led to the reaffirmation of his identity as a believing Jew. He wears a *kippa* and observes all the *mitzvot* as a matter of course. But he objects to the prevailing demonstrative religiosity.

"To me, my faith is something between a man and his Creator. I do not like to be labelled *'dati.'* If you asked me what kind of writer I am, I would say that I am a Jewish writer who strives to convey the crisis of being Jewish."

Considering his identity, he said tersely: "I am first of all a Jew, then a Hebrew, and only then a man of Eretz Israel in the sense of being an integral part of its landscape and its experience. It does not go without saying that being an Israeli automatically makes one a Jew. You have to work at it. As a writer I have endeavoured to show what happened to Jews from East Europe, migrants and Zionists, who were transplanted to the turbulent reality of Eretz Israel."

Be'er, whose first act of independence was to adopt his Hebrew name instead of the family name of Rachlevitzky, is persuaded that the Ashkenazim from East Europe have undergone cultural deprivation in the Israeli pressure cooker at the hands of the cultural levellers. He makes his own personal position clear by reverting constantly to Yiddish and regaling his audience with Yiddish anecdotes.

He blames Ben-Gurion and his generation for having been in too much of a hurry in dealing with the great diversity of immigrants. They threw lots of babies out with the bath water, he contends. Thus many of the oriental immigrants lost their traditional signposts, replaced by rootlessness and a penchant for violence.

Far be it for the young *sabra* to idealize the East European past, yet he feels that there is still much precious metal in its heritage that could enrich Israeli life. He liked the custom of the breaking of the glass during the wedding ceremony, seeing it as a fine symbol of the ancient Jewish conceptualization of sadness in the midst of rejoicing.

He also wonders wistfully what had ever happened to Jewish humour and satire, which could make life more bearable here. Musing over his self-image, he says, "I see myself as a writer who works within tradition, who seeks out form" — that was an essential Jewish quality so often lacking in our contemporary culture.

The seventh generation Jerusalemite has moved down to the coastal plain as a matter of choice. Not that he did not regard his birthplace with a profound wonder and love. He liked Jerusalem for its eccentrics: "An old Yekke once told me that Jerusalem is the centrum of the ex-centrum". Part of the reason for his move was that the city had proven too much for him.

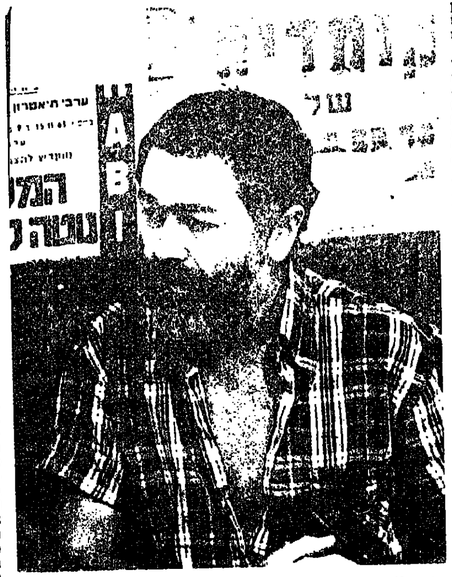
"To live 24 hours a day in Jerusalem is too burdensome. One wishes also to escape the fond if smothering embrace of a loving family...I find it difficult to sleep in Jerusalem. The night is the most oppressive time, when one feels one's solitariness to an extreme degree. The heavens hang lower in Jerusalem than anywhere else. Yet I do promise myself to return because of the children."

He chose the name *Notzot* after abandoning the original title of "An End to Wonders" (another author had brought out a book with a similar title), because he considered it to be a very proper Jewish name, with a host of meanings. "It has the strength of the eagle, it is also used to test signs of life. Attached, it is the liveliest part of the bird; once plucked it becomes beauty in death. Some feathers are dead objects pretending to be alive.

"I think I may have also chosen it because I associate it with the story of the pogrom my father used to tell about. When Petlura's Cossacks abandoned the wrecked township, the air was full of chicken feathers released from torn eiderdowns..." □

Unravelling the myths

Breaking the barrier between legend and reality is the concern of playwright Yehoshua Sobol. Mendel Kohansky talked to him.



YEHOSHUA SOBOL is one of the leading Israeli playwrights of the generation which grew up in independent Israel. Now 39, he belonged to Hashomer Hatzair as a boy and went to live in a kibbutz. He later studied in Jerusalem and in Paris, and worked for a while as a journalist before devoting himself fully to writing for the theatre.

Sobol's plays have been performed chiefly at the Haifa Municipal Theatre, but also at Habimah and at Zavta where a satirical revue of his (written in cooperation with Hillel Mittelpunkt) is having an extraordinarily long run. He is now finishing a new play — tentatively titled "Wars of the Jews," after the chronicle of Josephus Flavius — to be produced at the Jerusalem Khan.

"I have always been concerned with the myth of the Founding Fathers" he says. "They laid the foundation for the State of Israel, and it is the duty of our generation to continue their great work. As a member of this generation, with the burden on my shoulders, I have always felt the need to come into a more intimate contact with those men and women of legend. The strongest motivation in my writing has been the desire to break that barrier which separates legend from reality."

One of those legends on which he was raised in Hashomer Hatzair was the group which gathered 60 years ago in Bitanya, the camp where the young *halutzim* worked and held nightly discussions which frequently became orgies of accusations and confessions, as the participants strove to delve into their own and their comrades' motivations. Such a *Walpurgisnacht* of emotional revelation is the theme of what is considered by many Sobol's best play, "The Night of the Twentieth." It is based on authentic documents, but the playwright tried there to see the situation through the eyes of his own generation. He planted there contemporary characters to see how *they* would react under the circumstances.

Thus he found there a confrontation between the myth in action, the blind will to act, and the *ratio*, the cool analysis of the action to be taken. The one comrade who wants to discuss the rationale of the action, what kind of settlement to build, as part of what kind of society, remains in a minority.

IN HIS "New Year's Eve 1972," Sobol showed the generation of the founders about half a century later. "I was then very aggressive towards that generation," he explains, "and therefore I caught them at the end of their road." The representative of that generation, a socialist firebrand orator and ideologist in his youth, is now old and senile. He spends his time carrying on long discussions on issues long dead, with comrades no longer among the living.

Delving deeper into the myth of the Founding Fathers, Sobol found that the prevalent militarism, the admiration for arms and uniforms, is neither new nor is it confined only to the right-wing elements of the nation. If Begin invokes the words of God by asking an opposition MK to "put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" when speaking of Arik Sharon, he has not gone *very* far from the hallowed leaders of Labour in World War II who received Zeev Jabotinsky with his Jewish Legion like a Messiah. Eliahu Golomb, Rachel Yanait and even Beri Katzenelson accepted the Legion and decided to join it not only out of the necessity of having a defence force of their own, but with an enthusiasm for arms and uniforms, as one can see in their writings. The lonely voice of opposition belonged to A.D. Gordon who was revolted by what he called "hypnosis" of arms. When the decision to join fell, he wrote that "hypnosis won out."

THE HYPNOSIS goes even further back, with roots in the beginning of Zionism. Sobol has been recently re-reading the novels of Berdychevsky, the writer of the Period of Renaissance, and found there the Nietzschean admiration for the strong, the muscular generation to come, a generation not concerned with the moral scruples, with the intellectualism of the diaspora Jew. It was a prophetic admiration, as we can now see it.

Sobol sees the situation in Israel now as a struggle between myth and *ratio*, between fanaticism and sanity. Since the Six-Day War the fanatics have had the upper hand. It is they who set the norms, who establish the values by which we live; they decide the meaning of the term "a fine fellow." He hears people who come back from visiting a Gush Emunim outpost say "whether you agree with them or not, you'll have to admit that they are the finest fellows we have."

This struggle between myth and *ratio* is a recurring phenomenon in Jewish history. Researching for his new play which is laid in the period of the Second Temple, Sobol studied the controversy between the House of Hillel and the House of Shammai. Hillel advocated an open, non-tribal Judaism which was, in a way, close to Christianity, he found. One must remember that when he put Judaism in a nutshell by saying "love thy neighbour as thyself," he said it to a *non-Jew*. And there was Rabbi Yohanan Ben Zakkai, an extreme anti-nationalist who opposed the revolt against the Romans, who wanted a dialogue between Jews and gentiles. The followers of the House of Shammai, on the other hand, advocated total separation from other nations; they set up a code — including even a ban on accepting a gift from a non-Jew — which built an impenetrable wall between Jews and non-Jews. There is a striking parallel between them and the religious extremists of our times who see the non-Jewish world as untouchable for being unclean. Sobol was appalled, several months ago, when Rabbi Porush of Agudat Israel protested from the rostrum of the Knesset the transplantation of the kidney of a dead Jew into the body of an Arab girl; he was even more appalled to see hardly a public reaction to that speech. So have we become permeated by nationalist fanaticism that such an outrage no longer shocks us.

Sobol's new play is based on the struggle between the two forces in Judaism in the period of the Second Temple, between the Zealots of the House of Shammai and the followers of Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai. There was a time when the Temple was open also to non-Jews, and many of them came and gave offerings which the priests received with great respect. It was only when the Zealots gained the upper hand that this practice was stopped. The priests even refused to accept the offering of the Emperor, an act which greatly exacerbated relations between Jews and the occupying power, led to new repressions and eventually to the Revolt.

THE MAJORITY of the population were opposed to an armed struggle. They realized that the three million Jews living in Palestine — the same number as now — had no chance against the Roman superpower, but the Zealots believed in the myth of the tribal god who would protect his people even from the strongest enemy. When Sobol sees these days car stickers with the legend "Israel relies on God," he finds a clear parallel between the Zealots of then and the religious fanatics of our times.

The first act of Sobol's new play takes place in Jerusalem. The rebels have just scored a victory over the forces of Cessius Gallus, in fact the only victory of the war, the result of an accident, a breakdown in the Roman supply system. But the people saw there a sign from God, and were swept away by enthusiasm so that the most dovish leaders joined a wall-to-wall government coalition. Among them was Hanna the Priest who was in favour of a negotiated peace. He argued that being part of it, he could influence the government from within. Sounds familiar, doesn't it? It was a delusion; the Zealots took over the government, the moderates were liquidated — physically.

The only leader not to be swept away by euphoria over the first victory was Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai. He remained faithful to his principles, refused to take part in the revolt. He advocated to the end an open Judaism, he fought against spiritual isolationism. He is the hero of Sobol's play.

Asked whether he could see in our times a man with the ideas and the moral stature of Rabbi Yonanan ben Zakkai, Sobol sadly shook his head. □

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At war with the system

An angry and committed leader of Israel's social workers tells Robert Rosenberg of his chilling view of the social future.

WHEN YITZHAK Kadman walked into the Jerusalem café, nobody recognized him, although as chairman of the Social Workers Union, Kadman holds a major Histadrut portfolio and he's a gadfly to the Labour-ruled Histadrut and a painful thorn in the side of the Likud.

His ruddy cheeks and warm smile, as he warms up to his interviewer, belie a pessimism born of long involvement in the social welfare policies and practises of Israel. Yet, at 31, he knows he still has much to learn before he joins one of the half-dozen political parties that have been knocking on his door.

He has a knitted skullcap but he refuses to join the National Religious Party and indeed, argues that the extent of Israel's grip on the West Bank is not the key to the security of Israeli society. He says he's a socialist, but often finds himself feeling a greater affinity for the more socially-conscious Likud MKs than some of the Labour Party's leaders.

"I believe that wittingly or unwittingly, the systematic policy of the Likud government, and indeed of the Labour governments that preceeded it, is to destroy the social fabric of the country," he says, admitting his words are tough and angry. He speaks softly, but leans forward across the table to hammer home the point.

"The social Darwinism proposed by the Likud will lead this country into a catastrophe. Just one example — They want to close day-care centres, because they say they cost too much. In 16 years, the clients of those centres will be the illiterates like the 14,000 who this past year, were drafted into the army."

He has other statistics. They all add up to the same chilling view, and Kadman admits that it's precisely that view that has him more committed, more idealistic, and more angry than ever before.

"I have no other country. I was born here 31 years ago and I have nowhere else to go. I have no choice but to make sure that this is a society in which I want to live."

He talks about politics with the young Israeli's disdain of the "dirty business that politics is," but he adds that he knows he has nowhere else to go. "Academe is not for me. What I worry about is where I can fit into politics where I'll make the most impact."

For the past five years, Kadman has been at the very top of his profession. The most individualistic and iconoclastic of the Histadrut's organizations — Kadman's union has been led by him into an increasing militancy.

He's had no bosses to tell him what to do, and while old-time Histadrut *apparatchiks* have tried to force his hand, he's managed to retains his independence, and to earn strong backing from his rank and file.

He says his idealism is derived from a "desire to fight injustice," and the interviewer remarks that there are too few Ashkenazi-born Israelis who see things the same way as he does. "My socialism is in Judaism," Kadman says, citing Maimonedes' concept of charity as "not philanthropic but the mutual necessity of society." And he adds that the social health of Israel is "not just Or-Yehuda. It's Savyon, as well."

Yitzhak Kadman standing at the head of the table at a sit-in outside the Treasury in Jerusalem to protest against government budgetary cuts and (Below) *during the interview.* (Zoom)

He starts to explain his theory of Israeli society as one which must be built on quality. "We have no natural resources, we can't rely on quantity." The interviewer has heard it before from Jewish Agency speakers and Bonds salesmen. But suddenly he veers from the well-worn path of cliches about the human resources of the country.

"The governments of the past, and this one in particular, pay only a meagre lip service to this concept. They talk about social welfare and maybe even pour some money into projects. But with the other hand they take away what has been given."

Kadman doesn't agree that there's no poverty in Israel. Indeed, he says poverty is extending its tentacles into more neighbourhoods than ever before. And along with that poverty comes a sub-culture of poverty. No books at home, poor nutrition because of ignorance, and ultimately the most dangerous of all the aspects of poverty — "the feeling of repression."

"It doesn't matter whether objectively speaking there is repression or not. What matters is the feeling that it exists. And that feeling is derived from the

very subjective reality that the 'white people' get by in the system, while the 'blacks' are stuck inside it."

He describes an example from the army. An Ashkenazi soldier and a Sephardi soldier were both *awol* from the same unit. They both got 35 days in the stockade. But after 10 days the Ashkenazi was released. The Sephardi sat in jail for the entire 35 days.

"The Ashkenazi's father knew that there was a method of appeal and he wrote a letter to the commander, explaining the circumstances of the incident. The Sephardi's father knew nothing about appeals, indeed, didn't know how to read or write.

"What makes the matter more serious is that all the Sephardis in the unit were convinced that this was a clear cut case of discrimination. Objectively it wasn't. Subjectively, they were right."

Kadman doesn't know all the answers to the problems, but he is confident that he could work to set things right.

"Imagine two runners on a race track. They have to run 400 metres and one of them can run twice as fast. I don't want to set that runner back 200, metres, nor tell the one behind that he has to run only 100 metres. I want to give the one behind all the training and faculties necessary so that he'll be able to compete."

Thus, Kadman, born of German parents a year after the state was born, is dismayed at the direction Israeli society is taking.

"Until a few years ago the systematic policy was of creating dependence of the individual on the state. Now they're going to the other extreme, and given the reality of Israeli society, a social Darwinistic policy will result in an alienation that will divide this society in half. You can already feel it in the slum quarters."

"There was a time when nobody thought about not going to the army. Indeed, the only ones who didn't go to the army were the hardcore criminals. Now, in many neighbourhoods in many cities and towns, the norm is not to go to the army. 'If you go, you're a sucker, it's their army, not yours,' is the feeling. And that's just one example."

Kadman's basic proposition for the future is to create a "Gush Emunim of Social Affairs." But he realizes that the Gush Emunim of the present has two advantages.

"For one, they are organizable. The clientele who really need a 'Gush Emunim' are apathetic and are most difficult to organize. They have come to believe it's their fate to be stuck in the poverty they are in. Worse, they don't believe anything will help.

"Secondly, Gush Emunim by itself has no power. But they create the illusion of power and they do it by very concrete actions. We don't yet know how to do that. Social welfare is abstract — except for the clients. But we'll learn."

Despite his skullcap, Kadman won't have anything to do with the NRP. He certainly won't go to the Likud. Ideologically, he sounds at times like MK Meir Pa'il or even like Black Panther Sa'adia Marciano, but he doesn't want to be caught in the margins of Israeli politics. Labour has made some approaches, but he doesn't "want to be another insignificant MK in the Knesset."

To be a deputy director-general in a ministry has even less appeal after his five years as the "director-general" of the social workers union.

"I want to be where the decisions are made, and in the places where my voice will be heard. I'm thinking now about taking a few years to do a doctorate, and then come back into politics. But I don't want to be an academic. I want to contribute to making this society into a just society."

As this article was going to press, Kadman was organizing his rank and file for a series of progressively longer strikes. He isn't asking for better wages. He isn't asking for job preservation, as the Social Affairs Ministry claims. He's leading his supporters in a struggle for the survival of some of the social welfare services that have been chopped off by the budget axe.

"The emphasis has got to be on prevention. All the studies show that the earlier one starts with the social welfare client, the better the chances for success. But its precisely those preventive projects that are easiest to cut back, for they are not only expensive, the results show up only much later.

"One thing is for sure — it does almost no good to start repairing what was wrong for 18 years only when the youngster joins the army. You have to start much earlier than that. Much earlier." "Ultimately our society suffers from a lack of planning. And that will cost us more than what we'll save today in (Finance Minister Yigael) Hurvitz' 'free economy'." □

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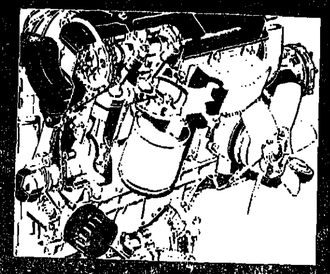

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The gap is the enemy

A lecturer tells Benny Morris of his first-hand knowledge of the problems of the 'second Israel.'

(Benny Morris)

DAVID DERY believes that the country's social-cultural gap rather than its ill-wishers abroad is Israel's primary long-term problem. The conflict with the Arabs is a passing phenomenon, he says.

"I am optimistic about peace. It is in the interests of both sides and recognition of this is now visibly gaining ground," he says.

It is the home front which engrosses Dery. "There is a feeling in the country that things will somehow work out even if nothing is done about closing the social gap. But we are headed for trouble, real trouble. Nothing is really being done," he asserts.

Dery should know. Born in Rabat, Morocco, 32 years ago, Dery, a lecturer in political science at the Hebrew University, is a policy analyst and advisor at Deputy Prime Minister Yigael Yadin's office. Last year he wrote a major, groundbreaking report for the ministerial committee on social affairs on non-working, non-studying youth. He is presently completing a study on distressed girls which promises to be equally forceful.

In the 1950s and 1960s, says Dery, it was believed that the school system, buttressed by *service in the IDF would* somehow succeed in closing the social-cultural gap through *compulsory integration.* "But the melting pot theory just didn't work." He believes that *the U.S. experience is mis*leading in this respect — and, in any case, in relation to the blacks, *the U.S. "melting pot"* failed to work altogether, Dery points out.

Dery's *familiarity with the* problem of the second Israel is as first-hand as one can get. He came to Israel as an infant with his parents in the early 1950s and grew up in Netanya's slum suburb of Dora.

WELL-ENDOWED intellectually, Dery was the "star" of the local primary school. But in the more culturally developed environment of Netanya high *school, he struggled to keep up,* emerging with a *bagrut* with low marks.

*He went on to do national ser*vice in the paratroops, highly unusual in Dora where the *youths either stayed out of the* IDF or served in service units. In 1968 Dery enrolled in the *Hebrew University's mechina* (preparatory course).

Luck, partly in the form of his *Moroccan origins* — as Dery is aware — dogged his footsteps. Finishing his BA in Middle East studies and political science with a 79.5 average, just short of the 80 required to enroll in the MA programme, and bedevilled by financial problems Dery began to look around for a job when he chanced to meet a political science professor in whose class he received an ex*cellent end of year mark. Tak*ing his future in his hands, Dery asked the professor for five *minutes, going on to explain his* financial and academic problems. At the end of the allotted time, the professor, as Dery tells it, rushed off to his office and called various university administrators and bigwigs. Within minutes, Dery was enrolled in the MA course, appointed the professor's assistant and awarded substantial grants to tide him over the lean years of academic apprenticeship.

From that point on, it was clear sailing. Dery completed his MA in political science with an above 90 average and was sent by the Hebrew University to Berkeley, where he did a second MA in public administration and then a Ph.D. Finishing in 1977, he returned to Israel and joined the Hebrew University's political science department.

Dery momentarily wears a bewildered expression as he tells this Israeli-style rags-to-riches tale. He notes that he is the only one of his family who went beyond high school. One brother currently serves as a major in the IDF, two others work in Netanya's diamond industry and his father works as a handyman in the Wingate Institute.

DERY FEELS that his academic accomplishments are almost incredible, given his origins. He illustrates this by telling me that his father was not believed by his co-workers when he told them of Dery's Ph.D. "Indeed, I wanted to give *my parents a copy of my thesis* — on the methodology of public administration — but they said: *'What would we do with it?'* "

Dery now feels completely out of place in Dora, and more *than a little uncomfortable in* his parental home. His parents, he says, are only "very vaguely *aware" of what it is their son is* an expert in. Dery visits them once every three months. "My attitude to my past, my relations with the people and fixtures I grew up with are something of a problem," says Dery, but declines to elaborate.

Sitting in his kitchen-livingroom in a two-room rented flat in Bak'a, Dery, a father of three, tells me of how in 1977, he in a sense "returned to his origins," as a social policy analyst and diagnostician. Returning from the U.S. Dery wanted to "work in the field," to "apply" and use "the bag of tools" Berkeley had given him, to "effect things."

His 50-page report of July 1979 on slum youth was the first major result of his work in Yadin's social think tank.

"Slum youth isn't really my field of expertise. But my social sciences tool-bag came in handy. My report was well received in education and government circles. But it has so far led to no high-level policy changes or decisions," Dery complains.

In the field, he notes, a few municipalities such as Ashkelon and Netanya, have adopted his proposal to establish "youth service centres." He still hopes his report — discussed by the ministerial committee on social affairs — will lead to reforms. He has similar hopes for his report on distressed girls, out in a month or two's time.

His government reports, says Dery, take up a great deal of his time. He finds it hard to keep up with the "publish or perish" requirements of academic life. He hopes next year to go abroad *on a sabbatical where he in*tends to write a book on youth policy and to prepare his thesis *for publication.*

He seems to have very little time for private pursuits. He *says he spends much of it* reading — mostly in English — mysteries, the Britannica and *short stories. Dery says he* would like to write short stories but "my English isn't really up to it *yet.*" He is considering collaborating with an American friend of his; Dery will supply the ideas and plots and the friend will write them up.

Besides getting tenure at the university and opening a private consultancy on public policy-making, Dery vaguely hopes to enter "public life" in the not-too-distant future. He wants to effect things, especially in the social sphere.

Aside from his work in Yadin's office, Dery's political involvement at the moment is confined to support of Peace Now, based on the twin beliefs that a Jewish state and a Palestinian state west of the Jordan can coexist and that absorbing the territories' 1.2m. Arab inhabitants will undermine the Jewish and democratic nature of the state of Israel. □

Coping with minority status

Joan Borsten reports on an Arab's formula for coexistence — politeness, fairness, honesty.

(Millman)

HAZA NATOUR was one of Tel Aviv University's first Arab students. It wasn't easy. In fact, says the Histadrut executive in sabra slang, it was like "turning somersaults in the air."

Born just before his small, traditional Moslem village became part of a Jewish state, Haza grew up in the country called Israel but in a totally Arab milieu. His Hebrew was so poor initially that he found it difficult even to ask his Jewish colleagues for help with his studies. There were such great gaps in the knowledge imparted him by poorly trained teachers in his home town of Kalansawa, where he attended primary school, and in adjacent Tira, where he attended high school, that as a freshman he discovered he was qualified only to major in liberal arts.

LIFE IN the "Little Triangle" (the largely Arab agricultural plain that has its apexes in Hadera, Netanya, and Kfar Saba) had not prepared him for the modern "big city" or the university's sophisticated approach toward learning. The Six-Day War had just ended and Jews were reluctant to take in Arab boarders. There was no one to help him pay tuition and rent.

"But I was already working in Tel Aviv. The Histadrut, in need of young Arabs to deal with the many Arab members of the building workers division, had hired me. Commuting from Kalansawa to Tel Aviv every day seemed like a waste of time. I realized I could be improving my mind. My father is a great believer in education. He is one of the few Palestinian Arab farmers of his generation who actually finished elementary school. He pushed all 12 of his children to study — even my oldest sisters finished 6th grade. He encouraged his seven sons to value education over making money. That's probably why we're salaried workers today instead of rich businessmen.

"I never planned to make a career of studying but I realized that I was good at it and that only the university could give me the tools to analyze what I'd learned about in high school, the tools necessary to understand life."

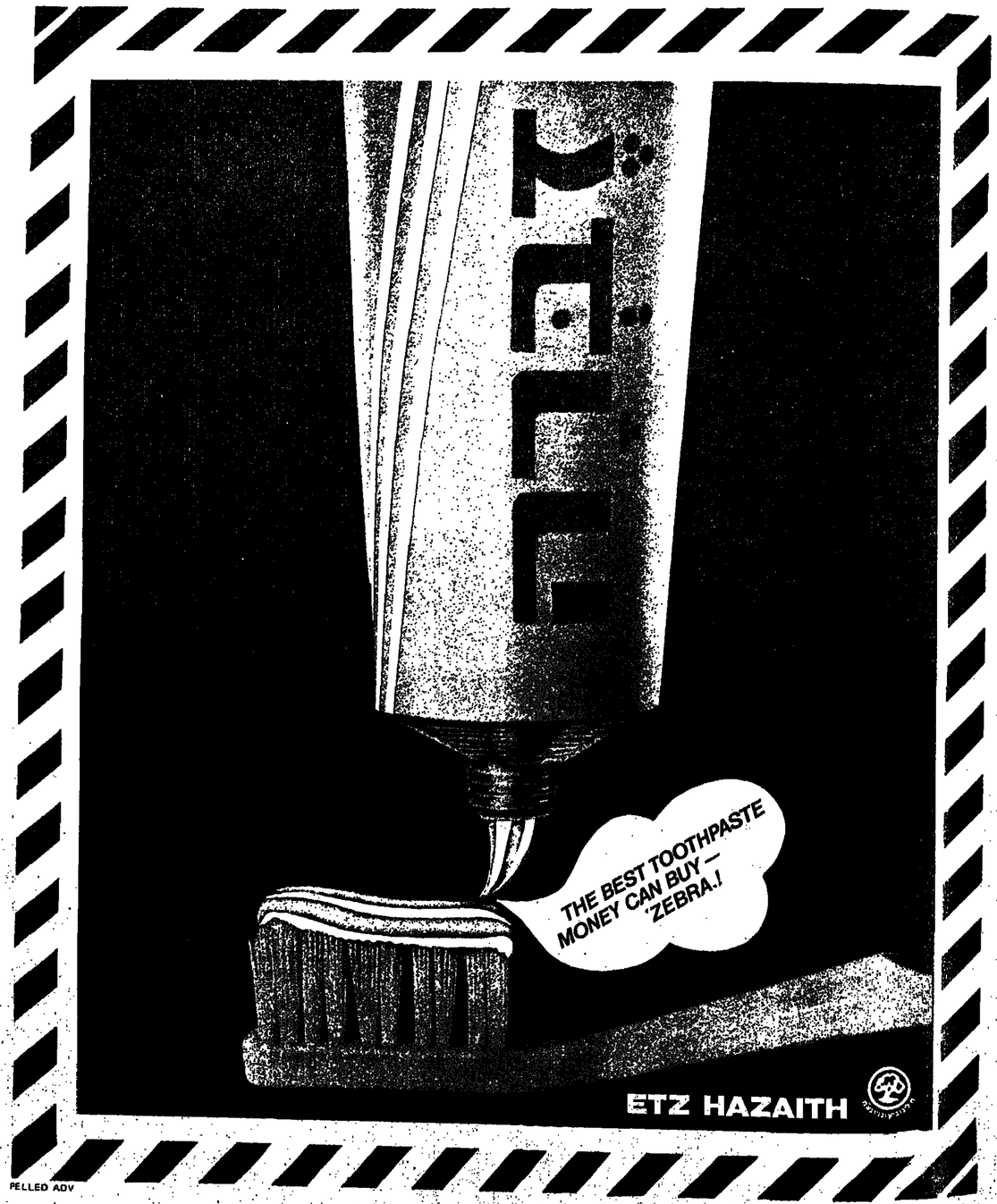
As he probed Hobbes and dissected Machiavelli, the young Arab also learned to deal with his status as a member of a minority in a country surrounded by enemies.

"I discovered that there are certain factors I cannot control — my nationality, my background, and my religion. But I can *consciously affect how* I relate to other people, my level of education, what I say. So I *don't try to assimilate, only to* be a good citizen. I assume that if I am polite and honest and *fair,* there is reason why others won't in turn be polite and honest and fair. And so I've always felt part of society.

"Of course, if I had it to do over again I would major in math or science or medicine and not in *luft gesheften.* The Histadrut official, in his open-necked white shirt, pauses. "You don't know Yiddish? *luft geshefft* means a free profession. You can't eat with that kind of university degree, which is why I decided not to spend another three years getting a Ph.D in political science."

ARMED WITH a Master's degree, Haza gave notice to the Histadrut, his sights set on finding a more challenging job that required an academic

(Continued on page 13)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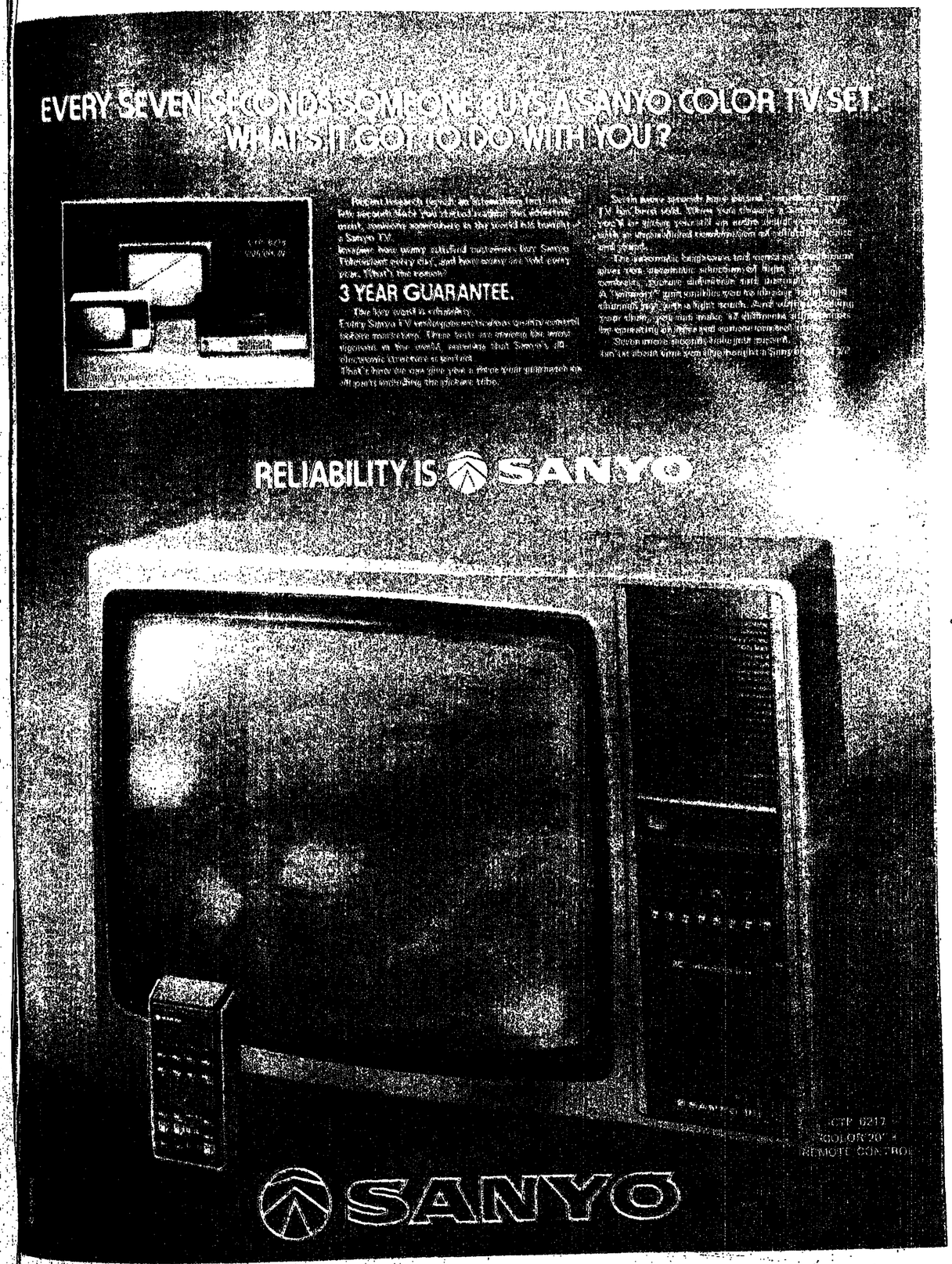
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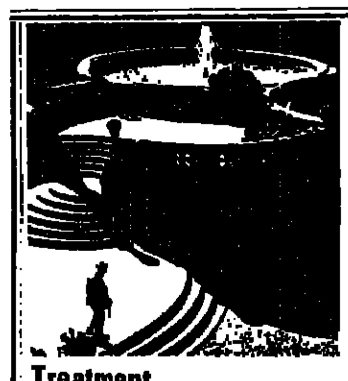

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REPORT SUSPICIOUS OBJECTS

The perils of not planning

A town planner tells Ya'acov Friedler that 'what's wrong with city planning is what's wrong with the country.'

(Zvi Roger)

DR. RACHELLE Alterman, born in Jerusalem two years before Israel was established, has made her mark as a town planning specialist, a traditionally "male" profession, with admirable speed. At 34 she is already the co-ordinator of Town Planning in the Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning at the Technion in Haifa.

Mother of a boy aged 8 and a girl, 3, Dr. Alterman (Leichter) says she is part of Israel's "lost generation" — the 30 to 40 year age group who, she says, "were brought up to honour values and not sanctify stones or hills. We were taught that we must build up Israel as a model liberal state, tolerant and understanding that would enhance the vision of true Zionism which puts the human beings and not the masonry in the forefront. My generation has suffered disillusionment because we were not expecting Israel to be just another country, where military might and not moral values are its strength."

She took her first degree, in sociology, at the Hebrew University and her master's, in city and regional planning at the University of Manitoba in Canada, where she was the only woman studying the subject. She won her doctorate in town planning at the Technion, which she joined nine years ago.

She believes Israel has marked up considerable achievements in town planning, as exemplified by the 30 completely new towns that were built here since 1948. "This is a larger number than in any other country, in absolute terms and very much larger in relation to our population. We can also take pride in the regional planning of, for example, the Lachish and Ta'anach regions," she points out.

"Our principal problem is the defective day-to-day running and development of the existing cities. The on-going town planning functions of our local authorities is relatively weak. Policy making is sporadic and long term planning is weak. With the exception of the three largest cities and one or two others the other towns do not even have a planning unit. In other countries every town would have a planner to deal with the over-all planning and to advise the Council on development," she states. "We still stick to the long obsolete custom of the City Engineer also being the Town Planner, in disregard of a city engineer's true function of being in charge of engineering works and such mundane tasks as garbage can installations and he should certainly not be burdened by long range policy making and city development, for which he has no time." This leads to two serious mistakes, Dr. Alterman believes.

The City Engineer is over burdened with details of building licensing and the provision of utilities and he is also not qualified as a town planner. The upshot of her diagnosis that the town planning profession has not yet received proper recognition in Israel "so we don't yet have a planner who can see the overall picture, with the physical, economic and social considerations as one totality."

A slim and attractive woman, but vigorous in articulating her strong positions, she had no hesitation in answering the question, what had she done to change the situation? "At the Technion, which is Israel's only school with a recognised, graduate level planning programme which trains students of a variety of backgrounds on an inter-disciplinary basis, I have been teaching planning theory and planning studios for seven years. I am trying to train a generation of planners." She feels "we have been able to change attitudes and today we witness the first signs of willingness to consider the hiring of trained planners. The Ashdod town council for example has engaged a planner and established a planning function. If it were not for the present budgetary cuts we'd already be seeing more of the same," she believes.

Her own speciality is the investigation of planning implementation and the constitutional and legal aspects of decision making in day to day planning. "I have found a distressing picture. The statutory planning situation has in effect collapsed. What is being done in the name of planning is really an invasion of privacy, the obligation to get a licence for adding a small room or closing in a balcony. These would be justified if they were part of an environmental and social policy of where the city is going, but not as an end in itself. What we have is the tail wagging the dog, with decisions made without regard for the total picture, if it exists at all," she laments.

A symptom of the situation is the frequent absence of an up-to-date Outline Plan in our cities. "I know it's not easy to get one approved, but our town councillors must understand that the Outline Plan is not a hit and run accident. It's supposed to be monitored and modified for changes and look a few steps ahead rather than filling holes left by the past, as is now frequently the case."

She is "trying to influence" the institutional aspects of planning through publicity and contacts with the ministerial committees that are aiming at writing changes into the country's planning and building laws. "Unfortunately they can sit for years without thinking they can consult experts who have studied the problem," a situation she is vigorously trying to rectify. Simultaneously she is attempting to "change the style" of Outline Plans in Israel's cities by investigation and the training of planners who are encouraged to promote OP's that will be "a much broader statement of policy and not merely telling every contractor what he can do on his little plot of land".

While she hastens to stress that design of buildings cannot be easily controlled, because one architect's masterpiece may be another's eyesore, she holds that planning and planners must be able to provide directions.

On the larger question of the future of the country, Dr. Alterman, who describes herself a "dove," feels that what's wrong with city planning is what's wrong with the country. "There is faulty decision making in all facets of government. Look at our policy towards our own Arab sector, in defence and foreign policy. With more thought, forethought and intelligent planning we could have avoided past pitfalls and certainly should avoid future ones. But if the government continues as it is, I'm very pessimistic."

On problems of feminism "I'm an egalitarian, and I have been lucky that my husband, a civil engineer, is also an egalitarian and has helped me advance in my own career."

She is very proud that she has one piece of "feminist legislation" to her credit... so far. "I succeeded in getting the Technion's Board of Governors to approve an 'Affirmative Action' clause which instructs the management to take affirmative steps to encourage girls to enrol," in what is still an overwhelmingly male university.

"This was not only a feather in the cap for women's equality. I believe it is a national necessity. There simply are not enough boys available to provide the Technion with the superior candidates for study that it and the country needs for our future. Restricting engineering and technology to men is a preconception that Israel cannot afford," she held. In her own Faculty she believes that even when additional schools of architecture are established in Israel, the Technion, by its nature, which now has the only one, will always be the leader in emphasising building technology and industrialisation in its school. □

Prizes and prejudice

Alex Berlyne makes some nominations for Independence Day honours.

THERE WAS quite an uproar a few years ago when the Beatles were awarded the MBE at a Buckingham Palace ceremony; many felt that the decoration had been debased. When the Israel Prize was awarded to a couple of curators instead of artists three years ago, the news was received with the usual apathy and I can't recall a single protest although I myself may have suffered a slight stroke in consequence.

After all, why stop at curators? I would like to nominate, for instance, the man who checks my electricity consumption for the Israel Prize for Sports — he once did the hundred meters in 12.37 seconds, though he took all day about it.

If the committee interprets Art so broadly, I would like to nominate Rafi, the framemaker, for his beautifully mitred corners. There are a number of art critics, too, who richly deserve the Prize for the seamless opacity of their prose, as well as innumerable collectors who should receive some sort of compensation for having fakes palmed off on them.

My own candidate would be an artist's model I know, whose translucent flesh... 'Ere. Quiet at the back of the hall! No, really, we could all do with a bit of uplift and good models are hard to find.

I've known some right slags in my time. One was such a messy eater, we had to Hoover her chest before we could start work. She had a bad complexion all over; I believe she used to cook in the nude and obviously worked too close to the frying pan. Mrs. Queen, her name was. Poor thing; afterwards she got a job as a stripper in one of the sleazy clubs which were springing up then but the dirty mac brigade kept shouting, "Put 'em on! Put 'em on!"

There's only one explanation for the committee's strange decision. They must have taken Nietzsche seriously when he said., "We're given Art in order not to perish from the Truth." No, I can't explain that if I'm ever to get on to the next paragraph.

But it's no use getting upset about such things; after all, Byron's mother died of an uncontrollable rage after opening a bill from her upholsterer. It is better to emulate her ancestor, Sir Thomas Urquhart, the translator of Rabelais, who is reported to have died of an uncontrollable fit of laughter on hearing of the restoration of Charles II. This being the case and not withstanding, as they say, I have decided to make my own nominations for honours to replace the Israel Prize.

The Jules Janin Medal of Valour to Barry Silkman, the Tel Aviv Maccabi footballer, who suddenly departed these shores when he learned that he was liable for military service. He'd lost his place on Manchester City's first team before he decided to try his luck in Israel and, moreover, his somewhat chequered career, which included Hereford, Crystal Palace and Plymouth, suggests that in the fullness of time he may well be a candidate for the Shipman Award as well. Shipman, it will be recalled, was a Leicestershire cricketer who was granted a benefit match by the county in recognition of his loyal service to the club. To quote from a 1934 yearbook, "on the occasion of Shipman's benefit, attendances were so poor that the player found himself some £60 out of pocket." Jules Janin, by the way, was a distinguished 19th century resident of the Left Bank who failed to turn up for a duel because it was raining.

The Bronze Laurel Wreath for Sculpture is awarded to Paul Braslow for his portrait of the prime minister (Safrai Gallery, Jerusalem) which is clearly influenced by the classical school and Tex Avery, creator of Bugs Bunny.

The Nostradamus Award to Marvin Cetron, of Forecast International, Arlington, Va., who predicted last month that Israel would be one of the most unstable countries in the world by the end of the decade. In a new edition of the works of Nostradamus the editor points out that, despite the current popular misconception, the 16th century prophet was nearly always wrong, his most glorious blunder being to presage a glorious career for Henri II immediately before that monarch was killed in a joust. More scientific forecasts have suffered equally inglorious fates: at the beginning of the century, when Henry Ford was already tooling up his Model T assembly line, a professional forecaster calculated on the basis of population growth and the concomitant increase in the need for transport that by 1920 New York would be seven feet deep in horse manure.

The San Do Lau Trophy with Blindfold to Ian Beder, the kibbutz volunteer from New Zealand, who sold military secrets to Egyptian intelligence officers in Madrid. In February, appealing a six-year sentence, he told the Supreme Court that he did it for a joke. If James Cameron, the veteran journalist, had been on the bench he might have given him a life sentence. Cameron once arranged to meet one of Ho Chi Minh's emissaries in Delhi in 1947. Carrying a copy of the *New Statesman* as arranged, he waited on the balcony of Maiden's hotel at the appointed hour. A small Annamese then approached him and drew from his wallet an enormous visiting card on which was printed in bold type:

Mr. San Do Lau,
Secret Agent.

The Standard Oil Award for Moral Fibre to the leaders of the nine-nation European Community for their carefully-orchestrated campaign to give the PLO a more important role in the Middle East peace process. This is even more remarkable when you consider what a busy work-load they have. Not long ago, their representatives in Brussels were discussing "associable lemons," "pottery restraint," "Canadian unbindings" and the convoluted "Northern Ireland Fox Destruction Scheme." Fierce disputes have raged over the "chocolate crumb quota" and the import of the intriguingly-named "dollar banana." There has been bitter acrimony between the members over such crucial issues as "citrus penetration premiums" and "social butter" — to say nothing of that source of permanent friction, "horse mackerel." It says a great deal for the power of the Arab oil weapon that even such ever-interesting topics as "birch plywood doorskins," "refractory bricks" and "carnation-leaf rollers" have had to make way for "Palestinian self-determination."

The Pushtak Award in the Social Graces to Yossi Cohen of Petah Tikva who recently spent 20 minutes in the company of my informant, Fay Lifschitz, an immigrant from South Africa, without once asking her the following questions:

How long have you been in Israel?
How old are you?
Are you married?
Do you have a boyfriend?

Six-month old Yossi is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Shmuel Cohen.

The Golden Tuning-Fork for Euphony to Dr. Hylton Bark, of the Beersheba Veterinary Hospital. This is the first time an Israeli has been accorded this distinction. Previous holders of the trophy have included Cardinal Sin, Archbishop of Manila; Dr. Zoltan Ovary, the New York gynaecologist, and Audrey Hepburn's husband, Dr. Dotti, the Roman psychiatrist.

POLITICAL AWARDS are somewhat chancy; hostages to fortune, you might say. Harold Wilson learned this the hard way when most of the people he knighted or ennobled in his last Honours List afterwards either committed suicide while under investigation by the Bunco Squad, fled the country or were last heard of eating porridge in one of Her Majesty's nicks.

Nevertheless, I intend to get on with the awards ceremony. After all, it is Independence Day and, as Lady Macbeth advised, "screw your courage to the sticking-place, and we'll not fail."

The Isaac Foot Medal with Bar is shared this year by Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin for gallantry to the point of foolhardiness in the battle for the leadership of the Labour Party. Isaac, the patriarch of the Foot clan, once asked Michael Foot what Randolph Churchill, his opponent in a by-election, had been saying to him.

"He just said the sort of things you'd expect him to say."

"What exactly?"

"Well, he said he hoped it would be a good clean fight."

"My son, I hope you didn't commit yourself."

The Max Beerbohm Bursary for Prescience, which is in my discretion (I am incurably superstitious), is awarded this time to Prime Minister Begin. Previous winners included John Lennnon, of the Beatles, for his fatuous pronouncement, "We're not going to make the mistakes your generation made." Begin has earned the bursary by his constant repetition of the phrase, which he seems to equate with action, "Undivided Jerusalem will be the capital of Israel for all eternity." The award is named after a line the incomparable Max once suggested to his half-brother, Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, as an effective curtain: "Where are you going?" asks the sorrowful heroine. "I am going," says the distraught hero, "to the Thirty Years War."

The Mort Sahl Sheild's recipient this year is Finance Minister Yigael Hurvitz who has managed to combine largesse and parsimony to an unprecedented degree. In the 'Fifties, Sahl used to do a satirical monologue at San Francisco's *Hungry i*, pausing every now and then to ask, "Is there any group I haven't offended?" It should be mentioned here that Hurvitz was also shortlisted for the coveted **Helena Rubinstein Prize** for Monetary Cosmetics after he changed the pound to the shekel without affecting inflation in any way. The winner, however, was the British Chancellor of the Exchequer who chose Isaac Newton's portrait to adorn the new pound sterling, thereby emphasising the gravity of the economic situation.

The Reversible I.Q. with Bedpan has been presented to Health Minister Shostak who recently admitted to a Knesset sub-committee that he hadn't the foggiest idea how much it cost to run the country's hospitals. There is an organisation of people with extremely high I.Q.s called Mensa International; the Israel award, however, is made possible by the generosity of another institution called Densa.

The Ba'al Trophy for Agriculture was awarded by a unanimous vote to Arik Sharon, whose inattention to his ministerial duties while otherwise engaged recently brought the country's farmers to the verge of civil insurrection. Elijah, the Bible tells us, mocked the priests of Ba'al when their god did not answer their prayers: "either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be wakened."

The Tokyo Bay Prize for Magnanimity to H.E. Sa'ad Mortada, the Egyptian Ambassador, who celebrated the Seder at the home of Shimon Peres. "I explained the passages (in the Haggada) which may have sounded anti-Egyptian," the Labour Party leader told the *Post*, doubtless referring to such awkward bits as the slaying of the first-born and the drowning of the Egyptian host in the Red Sea, and His Excellency answered, "Yes, we too were glad to get rid of

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A waiting land

(ERETZ YISRAEL IN THE PAST AND PRESENT) ERETZ YISRAEL B'AVAR U'BEHOVEH, ארץ ישראל בעבר ובהווה by David Ben-Gurion and Izhak Ben-Zvi, edited by M. Eilav and Y. Ben-Arieh, translated from the Yiddish by David Niv, Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, Jerusalem, 1979, pp.246, IL200.

Ben-Gurion (left) and Ben-Zvi as law students in Turkey.

BOOK REVIEW / Leah Abramovitz

WHEN DAVID Ben-Gurion still had a head full of hair and Izhak Ben-Zvi looked like a stern Turkish official, they wrote a survey of Eretz Yisrael in Yiddish which has just been translated and reissued by Yad Ben-Zvi. Few know about this joint effort between the young leaders of the Yishuv who were forced into exile during World War I by the Turkish government, and out of yearnings for their homeland decided to write about its history and current situation.

B.-G. and B.-Z. arrived in the U.S. in May 1915 to build up the Zionist socialist party. They visited over 25 American cities and appeared before hundreds of Jewish organizations. Since Ben-Gurion was sick during this initial period, Ben-Zvi carried the bulk of the burden. Despite their fervour and powers of persuasion the two future giants succeeded in winning over only about 100 new members. Their disappointment led them to seek other means of persuasion.

A collection of articles called "Yizkor" which came out in two issues proved very popular. Ben-Gurion especially became famous among American Jews because of his literary contributions.

Then with the encouragement of the Eretz Yisrael Committee of Poalei Zion the two decided to write a book which would cover the geography, history, archaeology, economics, legislature and politics of the Land; for as they state in the introduction, there were no books on Eretz Yisrael to be found in libraries written by Jews for Jewish readers. Most source material on the country was produced by Christian authors who gave their version of historical events and were unreliable.

The two exiles divided the chapters of the book between them. Ben-Gurion made the decisions in most cases, even taking on subjects which should rightfully have been Ben-Zvi's, like the *fellaheen*, a subject the future president had studied intimately. But Ben-Zvi, as was his nature, preferred not to quarrel with Ben-Gurion and invariably gave in. Each one wrote his chapters individually, sometimes miles apart, and in Hebrew. They then translated the sections into Yiddish and sent them to each other for comment. Thus the book achieved a harmony and unity unusual in a joint effort.

Ben-Gurion left all his other activities and worked on his chapters 13 hours a day. The final product though envisioned as a short, popular work was still to be scholarly based and indeed the bibliography notes almost 200 sources. He enlisted the services of devoted followers and even his wife-to-be, Paula, was coopted into copying out relevant passages from reference books.

"Eretz Yisrael, Past and Present" took 15 months to write. The Poalei Zion movement which sponsored and financed the project, sold copies of the proposed book months before it was written, which led to considerable pressure and bitterness. When it finally was published in April 1918 (the same month both authors enlisted in the Jewish Brigade), it was an immediate success and very much in demand all over the world. Nevertheless, the planned second volume was never written and over the years this first literary effort of the two leaders was largely forgotten, perhaps because it was in Yiddish.

NOW AFTER 60 years the book has been reissued as the authors would undoubtedly have wanted, with the dual sponsorship of Yad Ben-Zvi and the Ben-Gurion Heritage Foundation in its original language and on home territory.

The editors have translated only those sections which are still relevant and whose contents have not become superfluous because of recent discoveries. About two-thirds of the original book is reproduced, but the table of contents lists those sections not republished.

"Eretz Yisrael is the focal point of human history," wrote Ben-Gurion and then went on to explain why this little country has always kept the world busy. The pragmatic nature of the future prime minister is evident in his discussion on the borders. He claims we can neither rely on the historic or ideal boundaries of the Land; only the needs of the day will dictate the frontiers. Nonetheless regarding the Negev, he has the radical approach (in 1918) that not Beersheba should be the furthermost southern point, but Eilat (Akaba), as in the days of Solomon.

The climate and topography are given wide coverage in the book and their variety within the space of a few miles, accounts for the range of cultures and populations, according to the authors. The deserts and mountains act as natural barriers which prevent the mixing of cultures and thus one has primitive nomads, highly sophisticated city dwellers unique religious sects and secretive Druse tribes all living in the same country. Eretz Yisrael is called "a living museum of different races, peoples, tribes, sects, levels of culture and social traditions."

The chapter on Jewish tradition among the *fellaheen* is original. Ben-Gurion felt these local Arab peasants have Jewish roots, as evidenced by Aramaic influences in their language and comparative modes of living to those described by Biblical sources. The *fellaheen* have retained the original names of many villages and sites stemming from the Bible and their autonomous local rule depends on a "Law of Ibrahim (Abraham)" rather than the "Law of Mohammed."

IN THE conclusion, the authors grew almost lyrical in their description of Eretz Yisrael and what it can once more become if her sons will but return. It was a country without a people, they claimed. After the Jewish exile, no other nation actually made it their country or tried to develop it. It's true that the long Arab conquest (880 years, with breaks) left its mark in the language and religion, but the authors insist there was never an organic tie between the Arabs and the Land, neither historical nor national.

The Turkish conquest had even less influence. Their language and culture remained foreign throughout the four centuries of their rule. Only in legislature is their presence felt. Thus they explain why the once fertile, productive land remained a wilderness, since conquering nations were only interested in exploiting it for military or financial purposes.

"From the day when the dedicated, loyal and clever hands of her sons departed, she became a wilderness and a ruin, a desolation, impoverished and decayed."

"The Land awaits her people. Let them come to renew and rejuvinate the old home; give succour to her wounds; and by all modern means of agriculture and technology, redeem the gardens The fields will blossom again in Judea, the Galil, the Basan and Gilead which though long neglected, still have the power to produce. Let them come and with their initiative and labor, their will power and invention, they will bring about a change and like a magic wand the Land will again produce its treasures, its gifts of nature with which it was blessed. Let them come and with their pioneer spirit, enthusiasm and sacrifice, their bravery and creativity, the new Eretz Yisrael will be established and built anon." □

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Pharaoh." The prize is named for the brand-new sign spotted on a huge dockside building as the U.S. Fleet steamed into the bay following Japan's surrender in 1945: "The Tokyo Forgive and Forget Engineering Company."

DON'T THINK I didn't see you yawn. Unlike many of my colleagues, I, too, find the subject of politics to be an invaluable soporific. There's no real need for barbiturates while the party hacks continue to produce an inexhaustible flow of bromides or sagely noncommittal pronouncements on every subject under the sun, though I would be the first to admit that some of them give an almost convincing appearance of thought before speech. Let us pass on from the tedium of politics, then, to the *faule-shtick* of the medium.

The Samuel Taylor Coleridge Award, second only to the Montreux International TV Festival's Golden Rose, goes to Uri Dvir's *Beauty Spot* programme on the basis of the Central Bureau of Statistics ratings. *Nekudat Hen*, as this local product is known in Hebrew, attracts 62 per cent of the viewing audience compared with the 64 per cent who watch the imported *Upstairs, Downstairs*. Moreover, it does so by turning some of the most scenic parts of Israel into dismal, uninteresting dumps which make one viewer at least want to do away with himself. Its rating may have something to do with the fact that this ten-minute programme is sandwiched between *Upstairs, Downstairs* and *Mabat*. The statisticians might well consider this, as well as Coleridge's observation" "Praises of the unworthy are felt by ardent minds as robberies of the deserving."

The Bishop Berkeley Prize for TV News Presentation goes to the *Mabat* team for their consistent reportage of Israel as a darkling plain swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight. Their checkered coverage is presumably based on Berkeley's principle that if a tree were to fall in the forest and a camera was not there to record it then it could not have fallen at all.

The Viola Cup for TV Political Reporting is presented to Elimelech Ram for the years he has spent standing with a microphone outside government offices, the prime minister's residence and the VIP lounge at Lod airport, summing up the state of the nation. You may recall that Viola, in *Twelfth Night*, likened herself to patience on a monument, smiling at grief.

The George Raft Stipend has been won by Tuvia Sa'ar, the most worried-looking anchorman on TV, who usually resembles Werner Heisenberg formulating the Uncertainty Principle. Sa'ar gets the prize for his services to brilliantine.

THE HEAT and the flies and those damned tom-toms throbbing in the tropical night over the Tzavta Club do strange things to men, especially the headline-writers of the *Post*. Every now and then the pain of those old assegai wounds in their sides causes them to fumble one of those iridescent ideas which are flying about the brightly-coloured aviary of their minds, and they concoct really memorable pieces of imperishable prose. It is impossible to single out any of them individually so I hereby award the Magritte Prize for Surrealistic Journalism to them jointly.

Recent creations include the following:

"Scottish exposer pardoned in Rhodesia," used, presumably, because "McFlashit Freed" would have been too short for two columns;

"U.S. public support for Israel rising;" it's nice to think that those Irish-American old-timers who backed the 1916 Easter rebellion are still in there pitching;

"Blacks who count support Carter" seems to indicate that the innumerate and illiterate are going to vote for Kennedy, though this is by no means sure.

I recently overheard a youth who was buying a pocket calculator arguing about the VAT. The assistant asked him to check her arithmetic. "If I could work out the twelve per cent," he said, "I wouldn't need the calculator."

Post staffers are veritable tyros, however, compared with their colleagues working in the Jewish press abroad. Their work often has a symmetry, a completeness, which is undeniably lacking here. The London *Jewish Chronicle*, for example, often packs more into a few lines than we can manage in the same number of columns. I nominate their issue of December 14, 1979, for the Sleeping Beauty Prize for Jewish Journalism.

"In our issue of November 30," a story with a Glasgow dateline said, "we reported that the Lubavitch Foundation in Glasgow held a 'dinner and ball' to celebrate its tenth anniversary. This was incorrect. A spokesman explained 'The Lubavitch movement does not have balls.'" □

The relevance of Ahad Ha'am

Shlomo Avineri discusses a thinker who almost a century ago foresaw with remarkable accuracy some of the more perplexing problems facing Israel today. This is a chapter from Prof. Avineri's new book, "The Varieties of Zionist Thought" recently published in Hebrew by Am Oved and due to appear in English this year.

ASHER GINSBERG, who wrote under the pseudonym *Ahad Ha'am ('One of the People')*, was one of the more influential writers of the turn-of-the-century Hebrew renaissance in Russia. He was responsible more than any other writer for the creation of modern Hebrew prose and helped to emancipate it from the stilted, quasi-biblical, imitative language of the *Haskala*; his impact on Hebrew letters has been rivalled only by that of Bialik. Our discussion, however, will limit itself to his contribution to the debate about the nature of Zionism: in this debate his so-called 'spiritual' Zionism became identified as an antithesis to Herzl's 'political' Zionism.

Ahad Ha'am's biography is that of a typical son of the Russian Jewish *Haskala* (enlightenment): a Hassidic family background, studies in a *yeshiva*, external exams for a Russian high school, and then a failed attempt to enter a university. After many family vicissitudes, he settled in Odessa, capital of the Jewish Enlightenment; here he came under the influence of the emancipating and relatively secular atmosphere of that unusual Russian city. Through the writings of the Russian positivist Pisarev, Ginsberg became acquainted with the thoughts of Auguste Comte and John Stuart Mill. He was the first to introduce positivist elements into Hebrew publicistic writing, which until then had been highly influenced by the emotionalist tendencies of romantic nationalism.

Ahad Ha'am's first essay, *Wrong Way* (1889), prefigured to a large extent his unique position within the Hovevei Zion movement. On one hand, he became one of the movement's most articulate spokesmen; on the other hand, he appears sometimes as the severest critic of many of its public manifestations. These traits would also characterize his activity within the Zionist movement, which he joined at its first Congress, but from whose daily activities he remained always somewhat aloof.

Two essays, *The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem* (1897) and *Flesh and Spirit* (1904) are perhaps the most central to the way in which he developed his views on the modern Jewish national movement; through them we shall try to present his specific contribution to Zionist thought.

The *Jewish State and the Jewish Problem* was written immediately after Ahad Ha'am returned from the first Zionist Congress (which was to be the only Zionist Congress he ever attended). It is, to a certain degree, intended to offset the uncritical euphoria which enveloped many Jewish circles in the wake of the almost royal pomp and circumstance of the Basle Congress. True to his positivist and rationalist approach, Ahad Ha'am tries to sum up the message of the Congress and dispassionately discuss the challenges facing the newly-born Zionist movement.

Ahad Ha'am's point of departure is Nordau's programmatic speech at the Congress. Perhaps more than anything else this speech had imprinted itself on the delegates. Ahad Ha'am sums up Nordau's message by stating that it justly stressed the twin nature of the Jewish problem. For Eastern European Jewry, the problem was mainly economic misery, whereas in the West the Jews found themselves in moral agony, faced with the failure of Emancipation to give an adequate answer to the quest for Jewish identity in the modern world. Both communities thus turn to the Zionist solution — the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.

So far Ahad Ha'am follows Nordau's reasoning, yet at this point his sober realism raises a number of questions.

LET US suppose, Ahad Ha'am argues, that the Zionist movement has reached its goal: a Jewish state has been established in Palestine, and it absorbs waves upon waves of Jewish immigration. Will the Jewish problem be thus solved within a generation or two? Could all the Jews in the world — then numbering around ten million — immigrate immediately to the Land of Israel and thus cure their misery, be it economic or spiritual? Will the political solution — the establishment of a Jewish state — really amount to a true solution to the problem of all Jews?

Suppose, Ahad Ha'am argues, that the establishment of a Jewish state will not mean an immediate and total Ingathering of the Exiles, but initially only "the settlement of a small part of our people in Palestine; how then will it solve the material problem of the Jewish masses in the lands of the Diaspora?" Let us admit, Ahad Ha'am suggests, that the economic problem will be radically solved only for a part of the people, those who emigrate to the Jewish state: but those who remain in the Diaspora during the first stages of the process (and these first stages may last for a few generations), their economic problems will not and cannot be solved by the mere establishment of a Jewish state; their economic and social fate will still hinge on the conditions in their countries of residence. Since the Jewish state will not be able to solve the *economic* problem of those Jewish masses who remain — for the time being, at least — outside its confines, its only contribution will be in the spiritual and cultural spheres. Therefore the cardinal problem to be faced by Zionism is not just how to establish a Jewish state, but how it will be able to help resolve the spiritual agonies and dilemmas of the vast majority of the Jewish people who will continue to reside for the forseeable future outside the Land of Israel.

Here lies a certain paradox: Ahad Ha'am was certainly one of the most intellectual and least 'practical' of the first Zionist thinkers; nonetheless, it was he who succeeded in articulating most succinctly the most practical problem faced by Zionism once the State of Israel was established. While more 'practical' Zionists saw only the immediate future — the settlement of immigrants and pioneers in Palestine and the establishment of an independent state — Ahad Ha'am succeeded in identifying and defining some of the problems that were to become the most crucial existential issues for Israel after its establishment. Hence the contemporary relevance of many of his observations today is far more challenging than the vision of some of the 'practical' Zionists, for whom Zionism ended on May 15, 1948.

AHAD HA'AM agrees with Nordau that the spiritual dimension of the Jewish problem in Western Europe is basically different from that of the Jews in the Eastern European Pale of Settlement. Yet, Ahad Ha'am paradoxically argues, Zionism as such can, through its very existence, solve the Western problem much easier than the Eastern one. The Jew in the West, who has already severed himself from Jewish culture yet is alienated from the society in whose midst he lives and acts, will find in the very existence of a Jewish state a solution to the problems of his national identity: it may compensate him for his lack of integration into the national culture of his surrounding society. In an observation remarkably relevant to what the very existence of Israel was to do to many Jews in the West more than fifty years later, Ahad Ha'am says:

"If a Jewish State were re-established [in Palestine], a state arranged and organised exactly after the pattern of other states, then he [the Western Jew] could live a full, complete life among his own people, and find at home all that he now sees outside, dangled before his eyes, but out of reach. Of course, not all the Jews will be able to take wing and go to their state; but the very existence of the Jewish state will raise the prestige of those who remain in exile, and their fellow citizens will no more despise them and keep them at arm's length as though they were ignoble slaves, dependent entirely on the hospitality of others. As the Western Jew contemplates this fascinating vision, it suddenly dawns on his inner consciousness that even now, before the Jewish state is established, the mere idea of it gives him almost complete relief. He has an opportunity for organised work, for political excitement; he finds a suitable field of activity without having to become subservient to non-Jews; and he feels that thanks to this ideal he stands once more spiritually erect, and has regained human dignity, without overmuch trouble and without external aid. So he devotes himself to the ideal with all the ardour of which he is capable; he gives rein to his fancy, and lets it soar as it will, up above reality and the limitations of human power. For it is not the attainment of the ideal that he needs: its pursuit alone is sufficient to cure him of his moral sickness, which is the consciousness of inferiority; and the higher and more distant the ideal, the greater its power of exaltation..."

In Eastern Europe, on the other hand, the situation is radically different. Among the *Ost-Juden*, the agony is a collective, not an individual one, and what is cast in doubt here is not the Jewish identity of a number of individual Jews, but the collective existence of a whole community. For what has happened in Eastern Europe, according to Ahad Ha'am, is not only that Jews have left the ghetto, but that *Judaism* as such has left it. Traditional ghetto life enabled Judaism to maintain itself within the confines of the closed Jewish society, and thus a balance was achieved between Jewish and non-Jewish society based, as it were on the very separateness and apartness of Jewish society. But modern cultural development, which engulfs the peoples of Eastern Europe as well, has destroyed this Jewish apartness without at the same time allowing the great Jewish masses to identify as a community with the new national cultures emerging in Eastern Europe: "In our times culture wears in each country the garb of the national spirit, and the stranger who would woo her must sink his individuality and become absorbed in the dominant spirit." If in the West it is liberalism that poses a challenge to Jewish existence, in the East it is nationalism.

THIS CHALLENGE moves Eastern European Jewry to forge for itself a new focus of identity; given Ahad Ha'am's positivism, he is adamant that this new focus cannot be a return to the traditional religious symbolism of the Jewish past, nor can it be refocused on the apartness of the closed society of the ghetto. It is this new focus which Eastern European Jewry is looking for in the new society to be established in Palestine:

"So it seeks to return to its historic centre, in order to live there a life of natural development, to bring its powers into play in every department of human culture, to develop and perfect those national possessions which it has acquired up to now, and thus to contribute to the common stock of humanity, in the future as in the past, a great national culture, the fruit of the unhampered activity of a people living according to its own spirit. For this purpose Judaism needs at present but little. It needs not an independent state, but only the creation in its native land of conditions favourable to its development: a good-sized settlement of Jews working without hindrance in every branch of culture, from agriculture and handicrafts to science and literature. This Jewish settlement, which will be a gradual growth, will become in course of time the centre of the nation, wherein its spirit will find pure expression and develop in all its aspects up to the highest degree of perfection of which it is capable. Then from this centre the spirit of Judaism will go forth to the great circumference, to all the communities of the Diaspora, and will breathe new life

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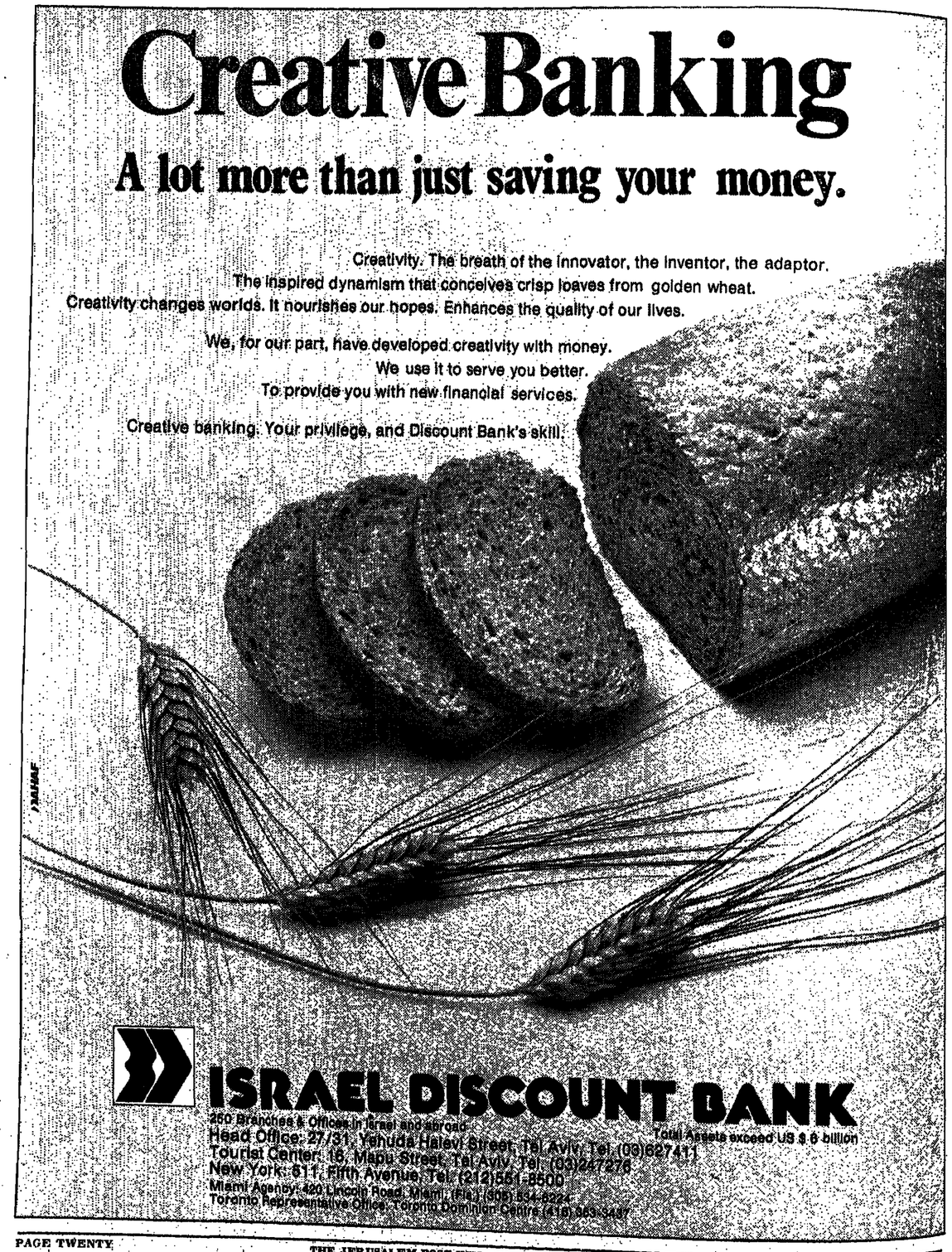

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into them and preserve their unity; and when our national culture in Palestine has attained that level, we may be confident that it will produce men in the country who will be able, on the favorable opportunity, to establish a state which will be truly a *Jewish* state, and not merely a state of Jews."

The Herderian and Hegelian resonances echo here most clearly in Ahad Ha'am's statement which maintains that the creation of a body politic is the apex of the cultural and spiritual forces of a people: a state is not created out of thin air, or through the *fiat* of a mere diplomatic coup. A state that will be created in such a way, before its socio-cultural foundation will be secured, will prove to be an ephemeral phenomenon, for the socio-cultural infra-structure is a necessary condition for political life. Hence Ahad Ha'am's opposition to Herzl's diplomatic efforts to secure a Jewish state through a charter or a similar device: such a state, Ahad Ha'am argues, will lack a solid foundation, will be without culture, without roots, and it may prove to be less than viable. Indeed, any reader of Herzl's *The Jewish State* cannot but be struck by the cultural shallowness and spiritual one-dimensionality characterizing his political structure.

Herzl's state, Ahad Ha'am argues, may perhaps be a 'State of Jews' (*Judenstaat* — as Herzl's pamphlet was indeed called); but it will not be a Jewish State (*Jüdisher Staat*), and it is a *Jewish* state which Ahad Ha'am would like to see established. Since a large portion of the Jewish people will remain for a long period outside the state when it will be established — and it may also take some time *until* such a state will be established — it is imperative that the new Land of Israel could become a focus for identification for *all* of the Jewish people. Because of the nationalist context of modern cultural development in Europe, a renaissance of Jewish culture in the Diaspora is no longer possible. Therefore, for the continued existence of a national Jewish identity in the Diaspora, a Jewish community in Palestine is necessary. Otherwise, any Jewish person who will not find his way to Palestine will be doomed to lose his Jewish identity sooner or later, and a merely political Zionism, focusing exclusively on the establishment of a Jewish state, overlooks this cultural dimension which is vital for continued Jewish existence.

According to Ahad Ha'am, the traditional strength of Judaism lay in the fact that the prophets taught it to value not only material, but also spiritual force. A Jewish state which will be devoid of spiritual Jewish values relevant to Jewish life in the Diaspora will lose the allegiance of Jews living outside it. Therefore Ahad Ha'am views so critically Herzl's vision of a Jewish state in which everyone will speak either German or French or Russian, according to their country of origin, and in which there will flourish Italian opera and German theatre. A state that "will be a state of Germans or Frenchmen of the Jewish race" is not a viable state, Ahad Ha'am argues, for

"a political ideal which does not rest on the national culture is apt to seduce us from our loyalty to spiritual greatness, and to beget in us a tendency to find the path of glory in the attainment of material power and political dominion, thus breaking the thread that unites us with the past, and undermining our historical basis."

This is not a challenge faced only by Jewish nationalism: according to Ahad Ha'am it is a dilemma common to all European national movements. All European national movements aim not only at the establishment of a nation-state, but also at a cultural and spiritual renaissance, one of whose manifestations is a body politic, but it does not exclusively focus on it. The national spirit, the *Volksgeist*, expresses itself in all the spiritual, cultural and material manifestations of a nation, not only in its political state.

THE LACK of such a spiritual dimension will be doubly pernicious in the case of a Jewish state: it may turn political power into an end-in-itself, and it will sever the bonds with Jews abroad. Ahad Ha'am is afraid of a hollow and sterile *etatisme* which turns the means — the state — into the essence of national existence: and this can happen when the national movement lacks spiritual and cultural dimensions. In an intriguing historical illustration, Ahad Ha'am brings Herod the Great's state as an example of such a state that was devoid of spiritual and cultural contents:

"History teaches us that in the days of the Herodian house Palestine was indeed a Jewish state, but the national culture was despised and persecuted, and the ruling house did everything in its power to implant Roman culture in the country, and frittered away the national resources in the building of heathen temples and amphitheatres and so forth. Such a Jewish state would spell death and utter degradation for our people. We will never achieve sufficient political power to deserve respect while we shall miss the living moral force within. Such a puny state, being tossed about like a ball between its powerful neighbours, and maintaining its existence only by diplomatic shifts and continual truckling to the favoured by fortune, would not be able to give us a feeling of national glory; and the national culture, in which we might have sought and found our glory, would not be implanted in our state and would not be the principle of its life. So we would really be then — much more than we are now — a small and insignificant nation, enslaved *in spirit* to 'the favoured of fortune,' turning an envious and covetous eye on the armed force of our neighbours; and our existence as a sovereign state would not add a glorious chapter to our national history."

Ahad Ha'am also maintains that it would be illusory to imagine that the Jewish state may have a third alternative to choose from — that of being 'the Switzerland of the Middle East', as Lilienblum would have had it. Such an alternative, Ahad Ha'am coolly observes, is unfortunately just out of the question — and here again, his chilling realism is remarkable when compared to the self-intoxicating rhetoric which flowed so freely in the writings of other Zionists of that — and later — period:

"A comparison between Palestine and small countries like Switzerland overlooks the geographical position of Palestine and its religious importance for all nations. These two facts will make it quite impossible for its powerful neighbours... to leave it alone altogether; and when it has become a Jewish state they will still keep an eye on it, and each power will try to influence its policy in a direction favourable to itself, just as we see happening in the case of other weak states (like Turkey) in which the great European nations have 'interests'."

The geographical area of the Land of Israel has always been in the centre of world politics, Ahad Ha'am warns, and it will

"But when the day will come in which the life of our people in the Land of Israel will develop to such a degree that they will push aside the local population by little or by much, then it will not easily give up its place."

always remain so: the Zionist movement would do better to have no illusions about this or about achieving its aim without confronting strong and powerful interests involved with that area.

AHAD HA'AM'S view on the necessity for spiritual content for Jewish existence is not a merely tactical or instrumental requirement: it relates to his fundamental understanding of Jewish history. In his essay *Flesh and Spirit* these views are presented within an historical perspective which sees in Judaism two elements, the material and the spiritual. At the time of the First Commonwealth, these two elements — which may also be called the political and the ideal — were still interwoven into each other, and they became differentiated only during the period of the Second Commonwealth. Ahad Ha'am sees the historical conflicts between the Saduccees and the Pharisees as focusing around these two aspects of Jewish life. The Saduccees saw the very existence of the Jewish state as the essence of national life, while the Pharisees saw the spiritual content as the mainstay of Jewish life and were ready for far-reaching compromises with the Romans so long as such compromises did not endanger national existence as it articulated itself in the ability to develop the spiritual content of Judaism. The Pharisees, according to Ahad Ha'am were the true synthesis of the spiritual with the material, and hence their dialectical defence of political power, which viewed it as a necessary tool but not as an end-in-itself:

"Unlike the Essenes, the Pharisees did not run away from life, and did not want to demolish the state. On the contrary, they stood at their post in the very thick of life's battle, and tried with all their might to save the state from moral decay, and to mould it according to the spirit of Judaism. They knew full well that spirit without flesh is but an unsubstantial shade, and that the spirit of Judaism could not develop and attain its end without a political body, in which it could find concrete expression. For this reason the Pharisees were always fighting a twofold battle: on the one hand, they opposed the political materialists from within, for whom the state was only a body without an essential spirit, and, on the other side, they fought together with these opponents against the enemy without, in order to save the state from destruction."

The destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans put the Pharisees' view to the supreme test, for it proved Judaism's ability to continue to exist even without the material infrastructure of a body politic. This was the Pharisees' finest historical hour: for had the Saducceean-cum-Zealot view prevailed, i.e., that the state is an end-in-itself, then the Jewish people would have ultimately disappeared once its independence had been destroyed, its country occupied, its Temple burned and most of the Jewish population driven into Exile by the Romans: the Jewish fate would in such a case have been analogous to the fate of all the other nations conquered by Rome. Jewish history, however, took a different turn:

"The political materialists, for whom the existence of the state was everything, had nothing to live for after the political catastrophe of the destruction of the Temple by the Romans; and so they fought desperately, and did not budge until they fell dead among the ruins that they loved. But the Pharisees remembered, even in that awful moment, that the political body had a claim on their affections only because of the national spirit which found expression in it, and needed its help. Hence they never entertained the strange idea that the destruction of the state involved the death of the people, and that life was no longer worth living. On the contrary: now they felt it absolutely necessary to find some temporary means of preserving the nation and its spirit even without a state, until such time as God should have mercy on His people and restore it to its land and freedom. So the bond was broken: the political Zealots remained sword in hand on the walls of Jerusalem, while the Pharisees took the scroll of the Law and went to Jabneh."

Jabneh became a new, quasi-political focus for Jewish existence, despite the lack of political independence:

"And the work of the Pharisees bore fruit. They succeeded in creating a national body which hung in mid-air, without any foundation on the solid earth, and in this body the Hebrew national spirit has had its abode and lived its life for two thousand years. The organization of the ghetto, the foundations for which were laid in the generations that followed the destruction of Jerusalem, is a thing marvelous and quite unique. It was based on the idea that the aim of life is the perfection of the spirit, but that the spirit needs a body to serve as its instrument. The Pharisees thought at that time that, until the nation could again find an abode for its spirit in a single complete and free political body, the gap must be filled artificially by the concentration of that spirit in a number of small and scattered social bodies, all formed in its image, all living one form of life, and all united, despite their local separateness, by a common recognition of their original unity and their striving after a single aim and perfect union in the future."

ACCORDING TO Ahad Ha'am, this synthesis of the material and the spiritual has to guide the Jewish future also after a Jewish state would be established: the ghetto has disappeared, and thus the material infrastructure for Jewish life in the Diaspora has been destroyed. To establish now a political homeland on what Ahad Ha'am would have called a 'materialist' or 'Saducecean' basis — i.e., without a spiritual content — is according to him counter both to Jewish and to universal historical development. For to Ahad Ha'am, following the Hegelian school, a state is not an end-in-itself, but merely the necessary foundation for the spiritual expression of the national spirit, the *Volksgeist*.

AHAD HA'AM'S realism is deeply rooted in an historical understanding of the context within which the Jewish national movement seeks to realise its political and intellectual aims. This applies also to his agonising realization of the dilemmas to be faced by Zionism due to the existence of an Arab population in the Jewish homeland.

Ahad Ha'am deals with the problem of relations with the Arab population in one of his first essays, *Truth from the Land of Israel*, written in 1891 in the wake of his first visit to the new Jewish settlements in Palestine. Ahad Ha'am's journey was undertaken on behalf of Hovevei Zion, and the essay is deeply imbued with the immediate and exhilarating impressions of the contact with the first attempts to create Jewish villages in the country. But Ahad Ha'am, unlike other visitors, is not swept off his feet by a naive romanticism, nor does he tend to idealize a rather complex situation: he comes out strongly, for example, against the widespread speculation in land which has already appeared at that early stage, and calls upon Hovevei Zion to stop this phenomenon immediately, lest it leave an indelible mark on the social and economic fabric of the new society.

But what distinguishes Ahad Ha'am's essay is his awareness of the necessity to confront the Arab problem in Palestine, and he has some extremely unpleasant things to say about the attitudes of some of the first settlers towards the Arab pop-

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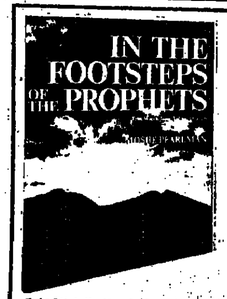

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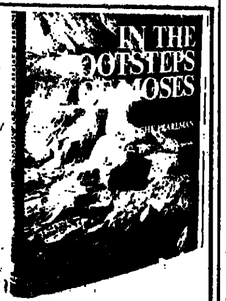

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ulation. It has frequently been claimed that Zionism overlooked the very existence of Arabs in what it considered to be the Jewish homeland: historically, this is an utterly false claim. It should be recalled how for Moses Hess the emergence of a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine went hand in hand with the renaissance of Arab nationalism and the re-establishment of independent Arab states in Syria and Egypt; also noted should be Herzl's humanitarian although perhaps slightly naive attempt, to integrate the Arab population into the universalistic humanist values of his *Altneuland*.

Ahad Ha'am goes even further: despite the fact that his essay was written earlier than Herzl's novel, he is aware not only of an existence of a massive Arab *population* in the Land of Israel, but also very clearly postulates the potential for the emergence of an Arab Palestinian *national movement*. If we recall that he was writing in 1891, at a time when hardly any manifestations of Arab nationalism in Palestine had arisen, Ahad Ha'am's awareness of the problem to be faced by Zionism in the future clearly attests to the great sensitivity shown by Zionist thinkers to the tragic dimensions involved in a possible clash between the two national movements.

AT THE outset, Ahad Ha'am argues in *Truth from the Land of Israel*, one should not harbour the illusion that Palestine is an empty country:

"We tend to believe abroad that Palestine is nowadays almost completely deserted, a non-cultivated wilderness, and anyone can come there and buy as much land as his heart desires. But in reality this is not the case. It is difficult to find anywhere in the country arable land which lies fallow; the only areas which are not cultivated are sand dunes or stony mountains, which can be only planted with trees, and even this only after much labour and capital would be invested in clearance and preparation."

Another illusion which Ahad Ha'am suggests has to be overcome, is the feeling that the Turkish government does not care or know what is going on in Palestine and that "for a little money we could do there whatever we want," mainly through the protection of the European consuls. Ahad Ha'am admits that "*bakshish* is a great power in Turkey," but he also suggests that "we should know that the dignitaries of state are at the same time great patriots, believing in their religion and their government, and in questions dealing with these issues will carry out their duty honestly, and no bribe could sway them." He also maintains that too much reliance on the European consuls could back-fire.

As in other matters, Ahad Ha'am demands a realistic attitude towards the Arab population in the country. Looking down on the Arabs or downgrading the qualities of the Arab population will only exacerbate relations between the two communities. Only by truly recognising existing reali-

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Give a town a bad name

Worse than katyushas? — TV time for a large family in Kiryat Shmona (Braun)

Judy Siegel ponders the negative image of the development towns.

"WHAT BOTHERS you the most here in Kiryat Shmona?"

Even though the question came from the President of Israel, the 16-year-old girl from the town's Danziger school wasn't tripped up by shyness or confusion.

"First," she said unhesitatingly, "is the distorted image TV gives to Kiryat Shmona. Second are the katyushas."

Yitzhak Navon was startled by the order of importance, but not surprised by her complaints against TV. He has heard them during each of his visits during the past to two years to development towns — in Ofakim, Shlomi, Yeroham, Safad, Eilat, Ashdod, Dimona, Neviot and others — as if resentment of the electronic media were an endemic disease. The poor image of the development town, in addition to the katyusha rockets and tangible problems like housing and employment, may be partly responsible for the high rate of "emigration" from Kiryat Shmona.

"Whenever a TV team comes here," said Michal Moyal, a Dimona teenager, when the President visited the Negev town for two days, "all they do is take photos of camels and of kids playing snooker. They don't go to youth movement meetings, or to libraries, or to theatre performances. They think that all we have to offer is camels, and that's what they take back to the big city on film," she said in staccato sequence, like a gun discharging its bullets.

"The day after TV news showed a story about our town," said Dalia, a Karaite girl living in Ofakim, "a bunch of us went to Eilat. Wherever we went, kids made a face when they heard where we were from."

"*Mabat* showed some horrible place in that story," added Orit, a volunteer in the "Youth to Youth" movement that helps the disadvantaged. "I never saw such a horrible place in Ofakim. But even if it does exist, it's not typical. There are many positive things here. They didn't have to give such a black picture of us."

Osnat Cohen, another Dimona youngster, told Navon that other young people suddenly turn cold when they hear "Dimona." City kids often pronounce it "Jimona" — a denigrating name that mimics the way some newly arrived Moroccan immigrants pronounce it. "I was at a course in Sde Boker, and we all got along very well. Then they asked me where I live. When I said 'Dimona' their eyebrows went up. I couldn't help but feel ashamed. When they found out I was born in Jerusalem, and lived there for four years before my family moved south, they explained to each other that four years was probably enough to make me intelligent enough despite my growing up in Dimona."

"Our averages in the matriculation exams are as high as those in North Tel Aviv," claimed Yuval Ben-Tov, in Ofakim. "But when Tel Aviv teenagers hear that, they argue that they must have made the tests easier for us."

THE COUNTRY'S 40 development towns — with their population of 500,000 — seem to be as misunderstood in the rest of the country as Israel is abroad.

To some extent, the gap of misunderstanding is understandable. In every country, "city slickers" make fun of "country hicks" and think them backward, retarded and helpless.

But the Israeli situation is different. Unlike most developed countries — where farmers and small town people gradually migrated into the big city with the growth of industrialization and urbanization — in Israel, new arrivals were *sent* to barren hills of rock or sand and told to build a town.

Most of our development towns were erected about a quarter of a century ago in a hurry on or near the sites of *ma'abarot* of tents and corrugated metal shacks. The development towns, with their uniform cookie-cutter flats in boxlike buildings, were viewed as a big step up for the immigrants from North African and Middle Eastern countries who lived in *ma'abarot*. For a short while, their occupants overlooked the apartments' tiny size, poor planning and low quality materials. As families expanded, and as the years passed, this housing became unbearable, and social problems quickly developed. With no breathing space in their tiny flats, youngsters poured out into the streets and often got into trouble. With no quiet corner for study, many lost interest in school and dropped out.

The fact that most of these new immigrants came from primitive societies, where women were illiterate despite rich Jewish culture and folklore, only made the stigma worse.

In the '60s and '70s, the North African immigrant settlers were joined in the development towns by tens of thousands of Russian Jews and others from countries of distress. These newer arrivals were "referred" by the Absorption Ministry to housing in development towns — the only places in Israel where there were large numbers of relatively cheap flats, which had been built in border areas to attract people who would protect the frontier.

Thus, there is little wonder that the development town became — in the eyes of the rest of Israel — the place where you go involuntarily, the place where you live if you haven't any alternative.

But the development towns I discovered on a number of intensive tours clashed sharply with this image. Even a Jerusalemite can envy the local boosterism and lush green beauty of Ma'alot; the vivacity and naturalness of the young of Ofakim; the tenacity and determination of the people of Sderot; and the creativity and imagination of the residents of Dimona.

So long have we believed the axiom that "the Second Israel is in the development towns" that we still think it's true, just like the long-taught and oft-held notion that the atom is the smallest particle of matter. The Second Israel today is on the periphery of urban areas and in big-city slums, like Ben Dor outside Haifa — where many teenagers are nearly illiterate — and the Hatikva Quarter — which is still waiting for salvation from Project Renewal.

Many development towns today are laboratories of experimentation — and implementation of successful experiments — in the fields of education.

In Dimona, for example, whose city emblem is appropriately a flower growing between two Negev hills, 150 mothers who barely finished eight or 10 years of education learn how to teach their own pre-school youngsters. Each woman attends sessions in a one-room kindergarten every two weeks, often accompanied by infants in arms. The Etgar Project, which operates in various places around the country, produces special workbooks that help mothers teach their children about size, colour and other concepts. Sitting in kid-size chairs among hand-made decorations and exhibits that suggest a caring hand, the women go over drawings and discover how to get their children to make up stories from them.

President Navon, who was greeted exuberantly and presented with homemade cakes, noted that he and his wife Ofira also receive the booklets and go over them with their children Nira and Erez. Counsellors noted that since that the mothers joined Etgar, their bearing and attitudes had changed completely. The newfound knowledge gave them a self-confidence they had never before discovered, and their families treated them with extra consideration and admiration.

All 24 kindergarten classes in Dimona visit the Revivim activity school once a fortnight, each time adding a new layer of development to their minds.

The municipality and Education Ministry have spared no expense in ensuring that the three- and four-year-olds get the best learning environment and teachers. Wood-panelled ceilings and wall-to-wall carpeting damp noise in the spacious, partition-less classroom. In one corner are headsets attached to tape recorders where the tots listen to music or stories. At another end is an exhibit of Moroccan folk costumes on life-size mannequins, made authentic with colourful Oriental rugs and copper trays. The teachers often invite the youngsters "in" to tell them tales of North African origin.

The attractive young teachers hide behind a handmade backdrop of corrugated cardboard, put puppets on their hands and read dialogue, pasted on the back, with the spontaneity of Habima actresses. After the tale of "*Muki Brogez*" is acted out, and the lively youngsters award them with applause, Navon asks whether it was the first time the children heard the story. When he is assured that it was, he quizzes them on details. Indeed, these youngsters — coming from crowded and disadvantaged homes — surprise him by giving the correct answers in a chorus.

Even the rundown Alfasi state religious school, which is located in one of the oldest school buildings in town, boasts computer terminals that are used to test the mathematical progress of hundreds of Dimona youngsters. Without the fear of being embarrassed in front of the whole class, each child works with the computer, answering problems in division, multiplication, fractions, percentages and geometry.

The machine praises a correct answer, offers a second chance after a wrong answer, and gives the answer and an explanation if there is another error. Each child's progress is calculated on a computer printout, and teachers whose pupils consistently perform poorly on a certain kind of problem are required to explain why.

Dimona, which also boasts a massive "open classroom" kindergaren in the Revivim school and has knocked down the walls in old elementary school buildings to allow a more flexible and imaginative education, claims to have one of the highest educational levels in the country. Ministry director-general Eliezer Shmueli has praised Dimona as well, and is considering the convening of a conference on education in the town to mark Dimona's silver anniversary.

There is culture as well, even on the elementary school level, and 600 Dimona youngsters who regularly take music classes at the town's conservatory sur-

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prise the out-of-town visitor. "And we have enough talent here to open several more conservatories," says its deputy director, as the sounds of Bach and Mozart made by kids playing the violin, piano and flute waft into the corridors.

Ofakim, the Negev town of 13,000 that is also celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, has produced a bumper crop of intelligent, articulate and vivacious youngsters. On any given evening, they are likely to be found — not sitting on iron railings like city youth — but taking folkdancing lessons, working out in body-building courses, learning dramatic techniques in youth centres or conducting political discussions.

Instead of watching TV, a dozen Ofakim youngsters sat in a clubroom whose walls they had lined with logs to lend the air of a forest cabin. One girl was seated with her back facing a group of boys and asking them questions. With answers transmitted through an intermediary, the girl had to figure out whom she was speaking to. In another room, 10th graders sat around round tables, with their counsellors, and prepared strategies for acting out the roles of the government, the city council or the parent-teachers' association.

Despite fierce local patriotism, many development towns are faced with the loss of their younger generation after army service. "They just have nothing to do here," sigh Yona and Moshe Jena, a Dimona couple with teenaged children.

A growing number of the youth in development towns are completing high school and going to college, but there are few places in development towns that offer a job that equals their abilities. Most of the towns have only a few industrial plants, and they are likely to make textiles or some other products that are not profitable and require a minimum of skill.

The Kitan Dimona textile plant — which employs over one-fourth of all the town's breadwinners — pays incredibly low wages (IL5,000 to IL10,000 gross a month for unskilled workers) and exposes employees to a continuous deafening din.

The development towns, which are now beginning to feel seriously the effects of the new economic policies, cry out for sophisticated industry, like computer technology, that could employ their younger generation and attract new settlers.

Though Ma'alot attracted hundreds of new residents through its recent well-publicized housing registration projects, most development towns have run out of vacant flats. There is little money for building new structures, and those who want to move out of their crowded '50s apartments are stuck.

The Housing Ministry's "Build Your Own Home" scheme, which allocates Land Administration plots to those able to pay for infrastructure and the construction of villas, has changed the landscape of some development towns. Impressive, one-family homes are now visible on a scenic hill in

Pioneers in Dimona's early days (Rubinger)

Ma'alot, and others — constructed in grandiose shapes and panelled outside with imported wood — can be found in the middle of nowhere on plots of sand in Ofakim.

Dimona Mayor Jacques Amir, for example, is planning a whole new quarter near the archaeological site of Mamshit, seven kilometres east of town. Covering 2,300 dunams, the quarter is to have villas, two-storey apartment buildings, a commercial centre, tennis courts and a swimming pool.

But tens of thousands of adequately sized and well-planned apartments are needed in development towns around the country.

So, if there is such a potential for development towns, and so much encouraging vitality among their residents, why do the electronic media and the press give them such a "bad image."

A senior newsman in the Broadcasting Authority, confronted with the complaints I collected on my tours, said, half seriously: "Look. If Peres and Rabin, the Histadrut and the Manufacturers' Association, the Likud and Labour and city mayors and development town chai all complain that we treat them unfairly, we must be doing something right."

More seriously, the newsman claimed that TV *does* show good things about development towns (he cited the recent documentary series on Beit Shemesh), "but no one remembers the good things. All you have to do is look in our archives."

Israel TV is planning a show that will highlight various spots around the country and show how the residents live. If it often chooses development towns and does it in an interesting way, it may be a boon to their image.

It might also take a lesson from CBS TV, which over a decade ago sent correspondent Charles Kuralt "On the Road" to find little human stories in out-of-the-way places. For years, these often humourous and always interesting items served as a welcome end to the daily evening news programme.

Even if Israel TV is not guilty, the fact that they are perceived as guilty means that something is wrong. TV news staffers must search their souls and try to determine whether they really are giving an accurate picture of development town life.

The country's leaders are also at fault. Everywhere I went, development town residents complain that over the years, leaders from the prime minister on down rarely make comprehensive tours — or even superficial and ceremonial ones — unless it is election time. Until they do, not only the towns will lose, but the leaders will miss an opportunity to feel good about Israel. □

Ahad Ha'am

(Continued from page 22)

Shlomo Avineri, author of "The Varieties of Zionist Thought," is professor of political science at the Hebrew University and was director-general of the Foreign Ministry in 1976-77.

ty as it is will Zionism be able to develop the tools which will make it possible for it to deal effectively with the questions by which it will be confronted:

"We tend to believe abroad that all Arabs are desert barbarians, an asinine people who does not see or understand what is going around them. This is a cardinal mistake. The Arab, like all Semites, has a sharp mind and is full of cunning... The Arabs, and especially the city dwellers, understand very well what we want and what we do in the country; but they behave as if they do not notice it because at present they do not see any danger for themselves or their future in what we are doing and are therefore trying to turn to their benefit those new guests [coming into the country]...

But when the day will come in which the life of our people in the Land of Israel will develop to such a degree that they will push aside the local population by little or by much, then it will not easily give up its place."

Ahad Ha'am also warns against violent or humiliating behaviour towards the Arab population. In his essay he refers to cases in which Jewish settlers found themselves entangled in typical squabbles with Arab villagers over field boundaries or water rights and in some cases used violent means to settle the disputes. Even at that early stage some of the Jewish settlers were of the opinion that 'the only language that the Arabs understand is that of force.' Recalling again that Ahad Ha'am wrote almost 90 years ago, one cannot but be impressed by his foresight in spotting one of the tragic dimensions which was to develop in the course of the emergence of the Zionist movement:

Yeshiva students in Jerusalem — "...from this centre the spirit of Judaism will go forth to the great circumference, to all the communities of the diaspora and will breathe new life into them... (Hartman)

"One thing we certainly should have learned from our past and present history, and that is not to create anger among the local population against us... We have to treat the local population with love and respect, justly and rightly. And what do our brethren in the Land of Israel do? Exactly the opposite! Slaves they were in their country of exile, and suddenly they find themselves in a boundless and anarchic freedom, as is always the case with a slave that has become king; and they behave towards the Arabs with hostility and cruelty, infringe upon their boundaries, hit them shamefully without reason, and even brag about it. Our brethren are right when they say that the Arab honours only those who show valour and fortitude; but this is the case only when he feels that the other side has justice on his side. It is very different in a case when [the Arab] thinks that his opponent's actions are iniquitous and unlawful; in that case he may keep his anger to himself for a long time, but it will dwell in his heart and in the long run he will prove himself to be vengeful and full of retribution."

IN SUM: It may seem a paradox that Ahad Ha'am, who has always underlined the spiritual, moral and cultural elements in Jewish nationalism, was also able to pinpoint at a very early stage some of the more perplexing *practical* problems that were to vex the development of the Zionist movement in years to come. But this should perhaps not come as a surprise. Political philosophers are, after all, people who try to confront practical problems: for if you are not praxis-oriented, why bother about the theoretical issues justifying practical behaviour? Moral philosophy is practical philosophy, and it is therefore the philosophers, or the more theoretically-inclined practioners, who have sometimes a better chance of realising what the practical problems are than those wholly 'practical' people who lack that theoretical dimension and hence so often find themselves thwarted by the short vision of their own crass practicality. Hence Ahad Ha'am's relevance to some of the contemporary problems facing Israel today. □

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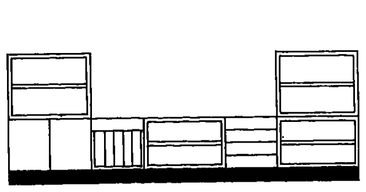

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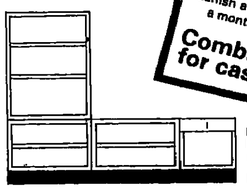

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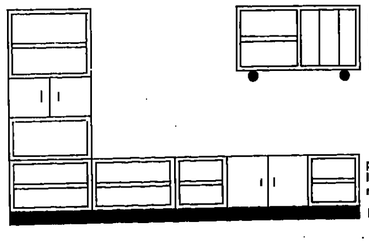

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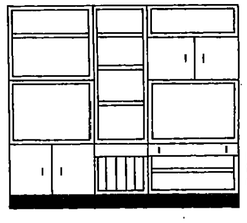

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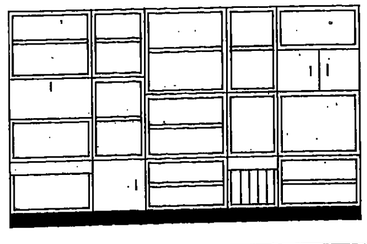

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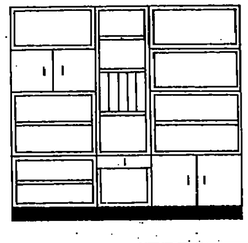

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